

A BOOK OF PRAYERS

CHARLES GORDON AMES



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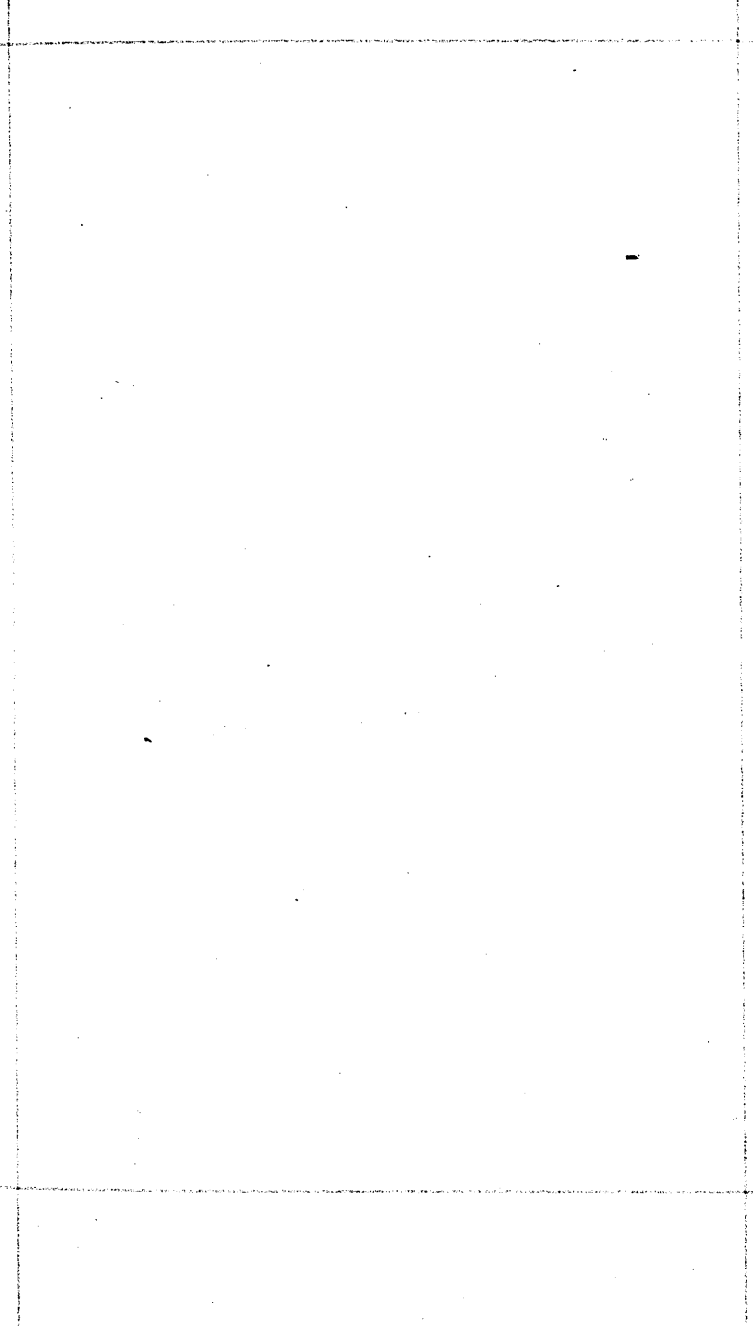
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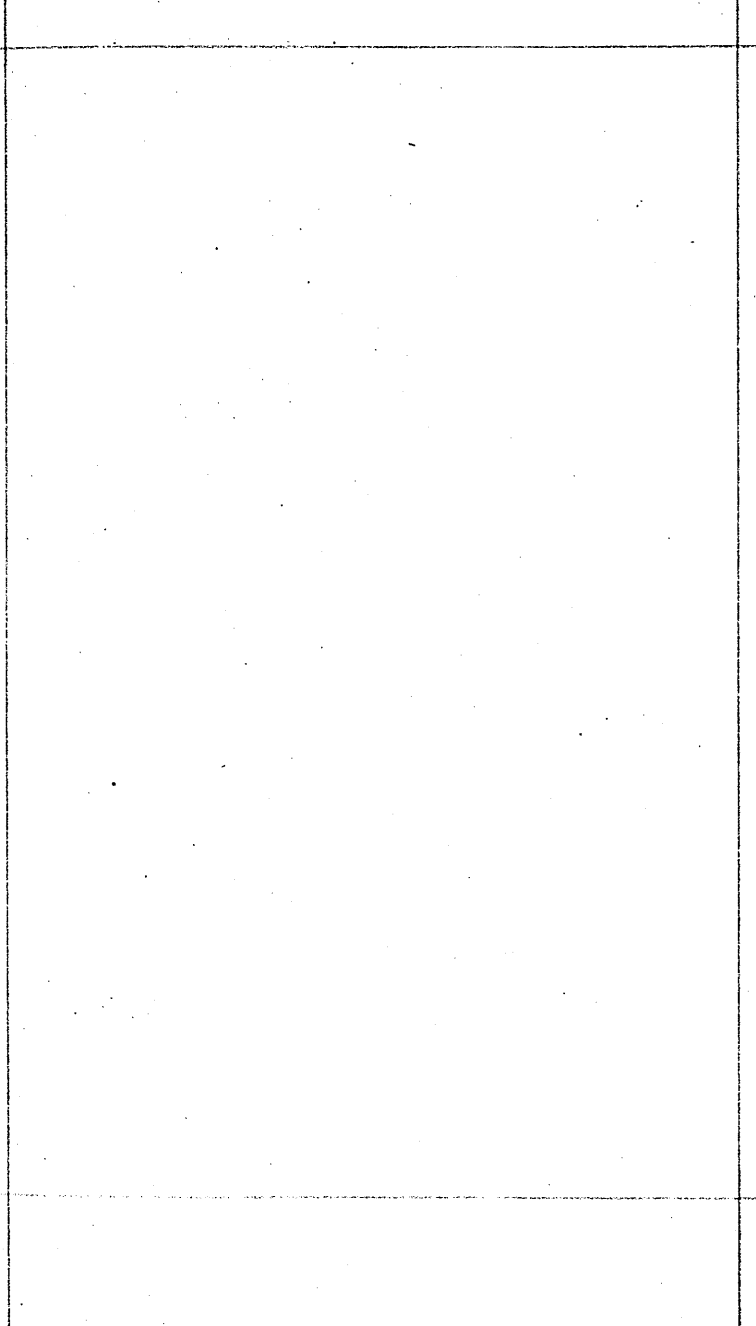
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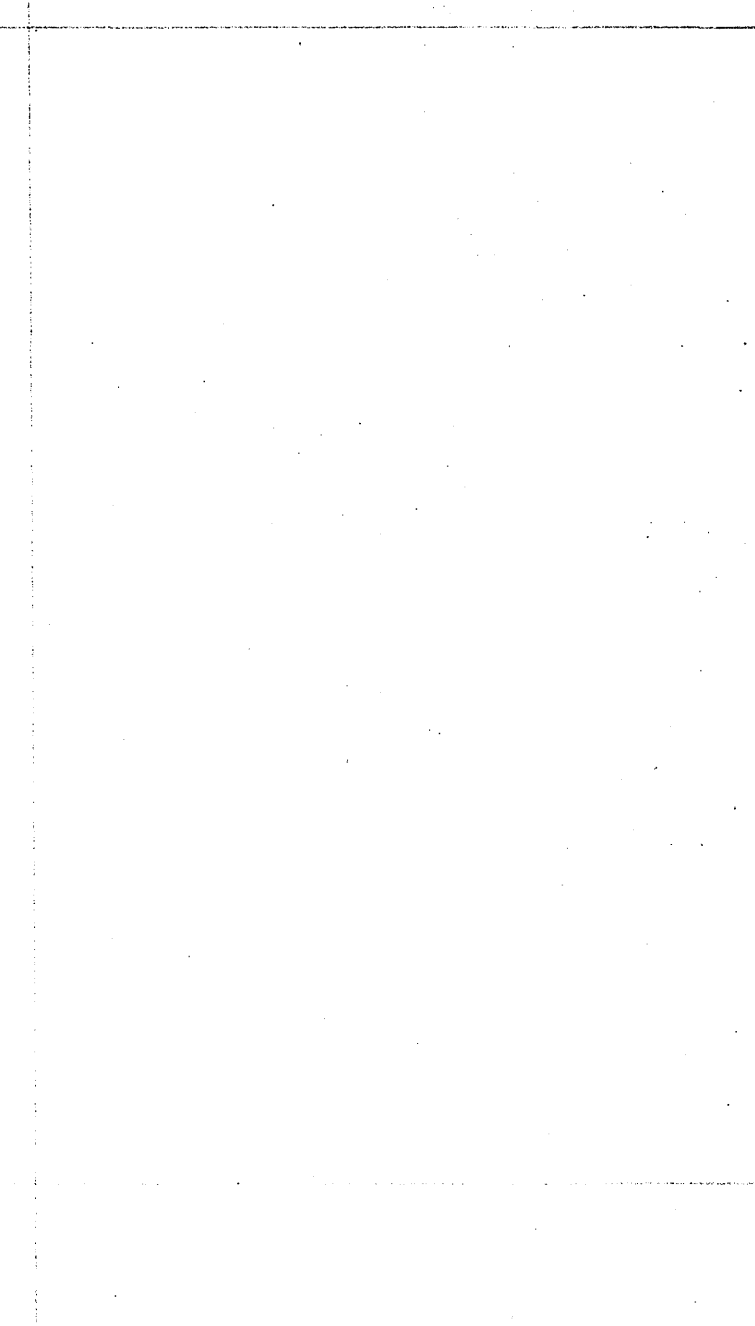
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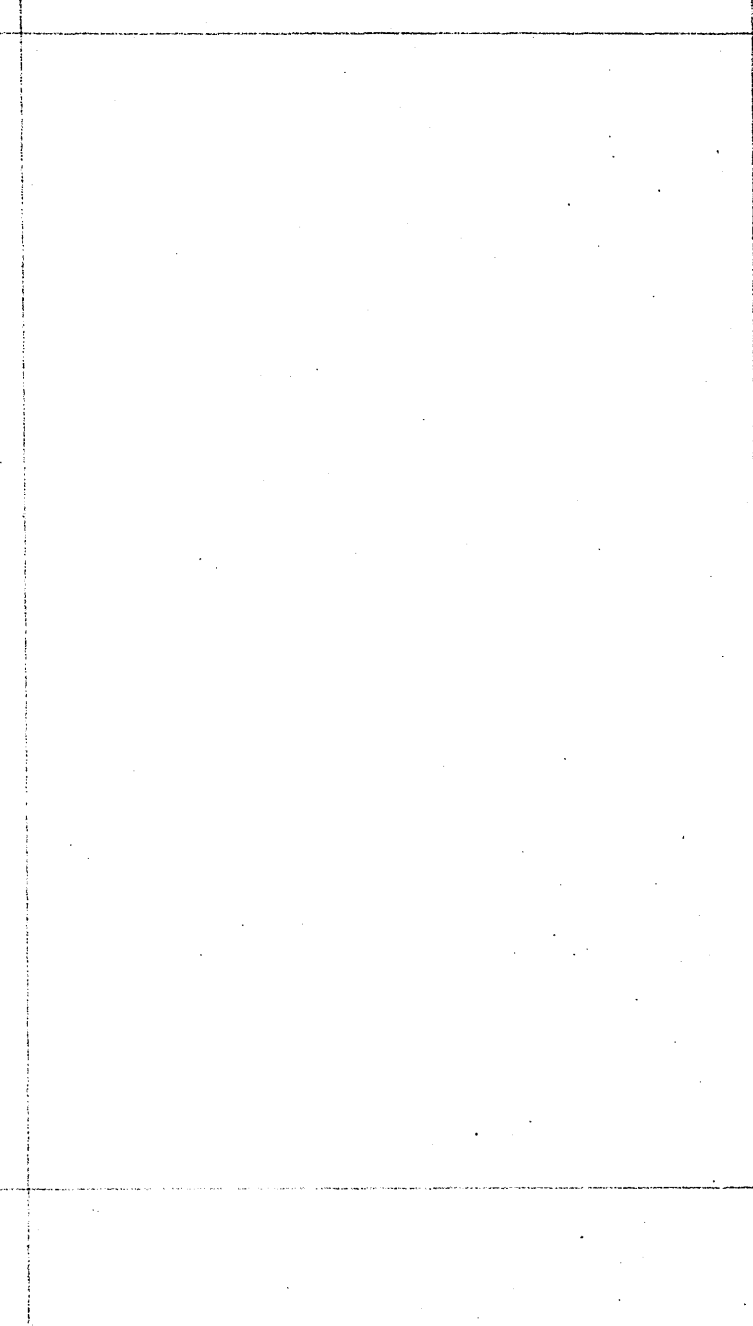
Pract. Theol.







A Book of Prayers



A Book of Prayers

THE
UNITARIAN
BY
OF
CHARLES GORDON AMES

Take with you words, and turn to the Lord

HOSEA

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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BV250

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN recent years, a member of the Church of the Disciples has made a stenographic record of some of the Prayers in which the minister has sought to lead and express the aspirations of the congregation. These notes — coming to him as a not unwelcome surprise — have been carefully revised, amended, and wholly re-written in the light of after-thought, and have supplied, with some added material, the basis of the present volume. It is printed to gratify the wish of his fellow-worshippers, and at the request of a committee of the Church, to mark his eightieth anniversary, and the twentieth year of his present pastorate.

C. G. A.

OCTOBER 3, 1908.

INFINITE ONE! Inhabitant of Eternity! Being of Beings! Fountain of Life! All the names by which we call Thee are but confessions of our ignorance and blindness. Not by searching can we find Thee out. Our childish thought cannot measure the vast spaces where worlds on worlds move in silence and grandeur; and how shall we fathom the awful depths of Deity!

Our spirits bow in humility and awe. What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou dost visit him! Yet all the shining hosts of the sky are less to Thee than one child in whom Thou hast kindled a spark from Thy perfect and eternal life. We can consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy hands, the moon and stars which Thou hast ordained; but they cannot consider us. One soul outweighs them all.

Our wonder melts into gratitude and trust; for we have dared to call Thee

our Father. Through all doubtful traditions, we have heard and believed this message of the Fatherhood from One who knew himself the Son of God and has taught us to read the same secret in our own souls. We respond to the high calling as our eyes respond to the morning. We are brought out of darkness into a marvellous light; for thy Spirit bears witness with ours that we too are sons and heirs of God. Teach us to accept this inward witness as the clearing up of that light which is given to every man, however obscured by ignorance, error and sin.

And now the whole creation shines around us with the new glory of that light which shines from within. We live and move and have our being in Thine, and in a universe where we may dwell as Thy dear children at home. We pray that our lives may be conformed to the beautiful order. In Nature and in the

soul, as in a sacred Scripture, may we read the laws of wisdom and love. In the likeness of that wisdom and love may our own being continually unfold.

Why else hast Thou brought us into life? Why else hast Thou awakened in us this conscious yet mysterious power of thought, and these affections that reach out like tendrils to cling to all things true and beautiful and good; this hunger for that bread of which if a man eat he cannot die? Surely our life, with all its strange experiences, is a school in which we are in training for a destiny worthy of the sons and daughters of the King.

While we muse, the fire burns. How the meanings of the world open and deepen like the sky! How our bodies, our senses, the orderly unfolding and use of our faculties in industry and invention, our work and play, our home life and love, our friendships, our rela-

tions with church and state and with all we call matter and mind, take on sacred significance as provisions for the welfare and education of spirits! And sometime shall we not give thanks and praise for the crosses on which we are lifted nearer to Thee?

O Lord, Our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thee alone be all the glory! AMEN.



GOD of Truth and Love, may this be to us a day of divine revelations! May the heavens be open; may the Dove descend; may the Voice speak to our hearts! May Thy Spirit interpret to our spirits the realities of life and of the world!

O Sun of Righteousness, may the mists of error and the shadows of guilt flee away before the brightness of Thy rising! May the phantoms of gloom and fear and doubt vanish in the light of Thy countenance! May we be filled with joy and peace in the assurance that we are loved with an everlasting love!

Too long and too often have we drifted with the careless crowd who have eyes but do not see, and ears but do not hear; our attention has been caught away from higher things by the glittering trifles and rattling noises of the world. Too often have we missed the sweetness of life; too often have we

yielded to the lure of lying vanities, and followed the cheating train of lower pleasures; too often have we turned away from the wholesome abundance of the Father's table to feed on husks, or to pluck forbidden and poisonous fruit.

— Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief. Why have we measured the generosity of the heavens by our own petty selfishness or our unworthiness? Why have we not expected all good things from that overflowing fulness which is forever giving life to all the creatures, and to which our whole world is as a bucket that can hold but a drop!

— O Lord, our goodness extendeth not to Thee; we can bring no gifts to the Maker of heaven and earth. It is for Thee alone to give. And dost Thou not love the cheerful receiver? We stretch to Thee our empty hands; we bring to Thee our empty hearts. We give thanks for the sense of poverty which makes us

aware of our dependence and need; we give thanks for the sense of richness when the cup overflows.

Yet all we call our own—even our being—is still Thine; and we would hold all as a trust. Teach us the law of use, that we may appreciate and appropriate the benefits of the worlds of matter and of mind. Teach us the law of participation, that we may gladly share these abounding good things and help to keep them in circulation for the blessing of mankind. May we be saved from covetousness and envy, from greed and unjust gain, from sordidness and all the sin and shame of living for ourselves alone.

May the love of God bring forth in our lives the fruit of love to the neighbor. May it spread among all tribes and nations, till cruelty and injustice, violence and fraud, the prejudices and hatreds of races, shall give way to the sacredness of

equal rights, the joy of mutual service, and the commonwealth of mankind.

Thou givest us an honorable place among the forces that work for truth and righteousness. To the good cause and the coming kingdom we would rededicate our church and our lives. And now, while we wait before Thee for a present blessing, may we receive the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind; and may we carry from this place a new readiness for every good word and work. AMEN.



BLESSED One! Spirit of light and love, of truth and beauty, of freedom and joy! We flee to Thee from thoughts of ourselves. Behold us, a company of seekers for the more abundant life. We have heard and believed that in Thee is no darkness at all, and that in Thy light we shall see.

Thou knowest our frame, and Thou hast not made us in vain! Thou hast much to give, though we take so little. Wilt Thou not enlarge our faith in the power that can do for us above all we know how to ask or to think? Not by any thoughts or ways of our own, but by the fulness and freeness of Thy provision, are all our wants supplied; and as we depend on Thee for our being, so on Thee do we depend for our well-being.

O Lover of righteousness, may we, too, find delight in the excellent of the earth. May we give loving reverence to all human worth. May we see Thy face

in all honest faces, in the innocence of childhood, in the men and women who are faithful over a few things. May we hear Thy word in the reasonable and cheerful speech of our companions; and recognize Thy wisdom in all useful and beautiful arts and actions. Day by day may we praise and magnify the great Name, finding God ever manifest in the flesh, dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.

May we not miss, through blinding prejudice, self-will or heedlessness, the guidance and cheer of any light Thou hast given to mankind, in old times or new. May we prove our discipleship to Jesus by sharing his loving and trusting obedience to the indwelling Father; by freely receiving and freely giving; by compassion to all who suffer or sin; by doing good, as we may, to the bodies and souls of men; by brave resistance to temptation and brave endurance of trial;

by committing our whole being to Thy keeping, in life and death. And O grant to our loving faith some measure of the power given him to heal the sicknesses of sorrowing hearts and the deeper hurts of sin; to cleanse the filthy leprosies and cast out the evil spirits which afflict our poor humanity; to bear witness to the truth by which men are made pure and wise and free.

May the examples of all who have lived well in the past or who are living well while we are on the earth, come home to us as rebuke and encouragement; may we never lower the standard of truth and purity in the presence of what is false or base. And may we put no hindrance or occasion to fall in the way of any weaker brother, but let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and take knowledge of us that we have been taught of God.

We rejoice before Thee that we have

come by inheritance into a Christian Church and a Free State. May we never be disloyal or indifferent to the principles of public liberty and private right, or to the righteousness by which alone a nation is exalted. May we, the people of this land, be true to our professions of impartial justice and equal law. May we be saved from a prosperity which works corruption at home and inflicts suffering abroad. May we follow after the things that make for peace, both among ourselves and in our dealings with all men.

Now, Father, breathe on us, and may our prayer be a response to Thine own inspiration! As a deep silence falls, may the inward door be open, and we find ourselves alone with Thee, yet united with each other in the communion of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.



UNSEEN Companion of our lives! We would seek rest and refreshment for body and soul.

The preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue must come from the prompting of a Spirit purer than our own. In the hush of passion, in the abasement of self-will, in the chastened sincerity of our desires, may we lie open to the heavenly teaching and receive in glad humility its counsels, its reproofs, its consolations.

May we be happy in our dependence on Almighty Goodness; glad that we are ever watched over by a friendly eye; grateful that the secrets of our hearts and all our concerns are known and cared for as we can never know or care for them ourselves; and that what we call our wills are ours only that we may make them Thine.

How patiently dost Thou bear with our childish weaknesses, our foolish com-

plainings and petty vanities; with our ingratitude for never-ceasing bounties, our misuse and neglect of sacred opportunities! Through all our folly and perverseness, some merciful restraint has held us back from our own undoing; in the midst of our uncomprehending darkness, the light has been steadily shining. Often have we stumbled and fallen; but a strong Hand has caught us, and we have not been utterly cast down.

We join to thank Thee for all the soft upward drawings; for the whispers of instruction and warning coming through the working of reason and conscience; for the mild or stern chastisements which have been for our profit; for providential leadings from paths of danger back to safety. Did ever kind shepherd so carry in his arms the unconscious lamb? Did ever mother so gently chide the wayward child, or so tenderly soothe its bruises and its griefs?

O if we have forgotten our best Friend; if we have walked in proud self-sufficiency, trusting to vain imaginings and following the devices of our own hearts; we bless Thee for the failures and sorrows that have taught us the need of a wisdom and strength which are ours for the seeking, but which we can never give ourselves.

And what need have we of wisdom, what use have we for strength, except that we may learn and do the things that are reasonable and right, in our appointed place and service? Only when we gladly realize that we are not our own, and that we must be about our Father's business, shall we find that the yoke is easy and the burden light.

At this good hour, and in our sanctuary of prayer, we would remember that our Father's business and our appointed place of service is in the human world. May our hearts go out in sym-

pathy to our fellow beings. As workers together with God and all good men, in the Christ-spirit of sonship to Thee and of unselfish love to our brethren, may we be fitted to bear some humble part in the common life of our time. As disciples of One who went about doing good, because God was with him, may we receive and impart that spiritual light and life, that power and peace, by which Thy good will is done on earth and human life becomes divine. AMEN.



ETERNAL ONE! May we draw near in reverent humility, yet with the assurance of faith. Mercifully bring us into communication with Thy wisdom and goodness. Are we not here with Thee, even more closely and intimately than we can be with each other? May the sad thought of our unworthiness, our folly and sin, pass out of mind as we contemplate that infinite perfection which is infinite love.

What is there in Thy being which we may not humbly hope to share? Is it not Thy good will that we should be pure and wise, just and merciful, strong and calm, as Thou art? When we pray for these spiritual gifts, is not our prayer Thy prompting? O busiest of beings, yet dwelling in unbroken peace, may we not learn from Thee to find rest in our work? May we not draw from the exhaustless Source of life both power and repose?

Father of men, surely Thou hast taken us in hand to bring us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Our life on earth is Thine appointed scene and school of our development. Thou hast shown us what is good. We need not ascend the heights nor descend to the depths; for the word is nigh, even in our hearts. Our minds are tables of the law and records of revelation, most surely written by the finger of God. But in mercy to our dullness Thou hast raised up anointed ones,—men of vision, prophets, seers and bards, bearing in their hands the keys of knowledge, and interpreting to us the parables of the world and the soul. How many great truths were written aforetime, in our imperfect human language, that we through comfort of the Scriptures might have hope! How many voices of inspiration are speaking to us to-day! Doth not Thy wisdom ever call to the sons of

men? Forgive the slowness of our understanding. May we quench no lamp that may help us to walk through the dark places, until the inner day shall dawn, and the day-star shall arise in our hearts, as it shone in the great Teacher who spake with the authority of that spiritual insight which is given only to a holy soul.

We thank Thee for all our human helpers; and that even imperfect and misshapen earthen vessels may hold the heavenly treasure. May we make the most and best of all social relations and opportunities, that we may give no occasion of stumbling, but forbear one another in love, and be gentle and patient toward all men. By living together on heavenly principles and in the heavenly spirit, may we make of the society of mortals a preparation for something further on and higher up, as we move to join the spirits of the just made

perfect. How far up they seem, and how low down are we! Will a thousand years yet seem to us as one day! Whatever toilsome and painful period of purgatorial discipline our low and slow development may require, we shall sometime and somewhere live to thank Him who doeth all things well.

As Thou givest Thyself to us all, so help us to give ourselves to each other, in common sympathy and helpful service. May we be the messengers and ministers of the glorious gospel of the Fatherhood and the Brotherhood. May we preach and exemplify that gospel by the honest kindliness and sweet reasonableness of our daily life. As a company of disciples, may we stand fast in the liberty and walk in the light, and dwell in the purity and peace of the faith that shall make us faithful to the end, — to that end which we trust will be the beginning of a life without end. AMEN.



FATHER, hallowed be Thy Name! Hallowed on our lips and in our hearts! Hallowed as it is written on Thy works and as we read it in the nature which bears Thine image! Hallowed as it is breathed by the child at the mother's knee, and as it rises in the songs of worshiping assemblies!

We thank Thee for the word and example of that great Son of God who has taught us when we pray to say, Father, hallowed be Thy Name! May we join him in prayer to his Father and ours; may we join him in lowly dependence and childlike truth; that, being led by the Spirit of God, we too may become sons of God.

But oh how far we are from conformity to that pattern of divine humanity! How faint is the inward assurance that we are children of God, and how little we feel at home in the Father's presence! Through what new births, what regen-

erative changes, what spiritual transformations and refinements, must we pass before we can take full possession of our inheritance! Yet we are not left to ourselves; we are not content to remain as we are; and still we pray that Thy kingdom may come and that Thy will may be done, in us and by us, even while on earth. O create in us the clean heart, and renew in us the right spirit; so that being fashioned in Thy likeness, we may at last be satisfied.

May we know that to grow into God-likeness is the unfolding of our proper nature; that this is for us the way and end of life, that for this Thou hast made us, and hast placed us in this school and scene of the world. To become like Thee we must shed away and leave behind our unlikeness; we must no longer serve other masters; we must make Thy will our only law; we must accept the cleansing and refining discipline of self-denial

and the chastening of suffering; we must copy into our life and love all divine qualities; we must become true with Thy truth, wise with Thy wisdom, pure with Thy holiness, just with Thy justice, and kind with Thy kindness. And when we are led by the Spirit of God, we shall be indeed sons of God, brothers of Jesus and sharers of the anointing which made him the Christ.

O teach and help us thus to take up the sweet and sacred burden of our life and our lot. Inspire us with confidence in our high destiny, and with firmer purpose to run the race that is set before us.

May we never lose patience with ourselves, nor be discouraged by the slowness of our progress, nor become weary in well-doing. Thou wilt lay on us no needless burden; Thou wilt withhold no needed strength. We go not to the warfare at our own cost; all our affairs are more Thine than ours.

Hitherto Thou hast helped. Grateful for the yesterdays and refreshed by to-day, we go forward with confidence to meet the coming morrows. Our times are in Thy hand; our ways are in Thy sight. Help us to be well rid of every thought or feeling or tradition which seems to set us up with interests apart from Thine, or which can ever separate us from Thy love.

And now may we know ourselves, partners and fellow-workers with God in the making of sacred history. May we be wise and strong to serve our time and generation. May we fill seven days in every week with divine service and holy communion. So in the wise and worthy uses of this little earthly home, may we find a growing preparation for the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. AMEN.



MASTER of Assemblies! Wilt Thou not take the direction of our thoughts and be Thyself the spirit of our worship! On this day of light and rest, of peace and prayer, may we come forth into a large place. May we find ourselves with Thee in the great House of Life. May the world widen and brighten around us as one of the many mansions, and as a forecourt of heaven. May the appointments of nature and the provisions of grace open to our view as parts of the one divine order. May this sense of largeness and richness, of fulness and freedom, help us to forget our petty cares and needless worries, and to find our life by losing it in the universal love. Is it not Thy good pleasure to give us this glorious kingdom of the spirit?

Yet we know that only the pure in heart can enter into possession of the great inheritance. We would make haste

to put our hearts and lives in order. We would learn the secret of that blessed One, whose obedience brought the inward assurance, "All things that the Father hath are mine"; which enabled his early followers to say, "All things present and to come are ours," and which in a more ancient age broke forth in the triumphant song of a Hebrew bard: "The Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

We thank Thee for the law which keeps us without till we are willing to enter by the door. Our morning prayer is not that we may be admitted to joint proprietorship with Thee while still unfit, but that we may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light by becoming like them in saintliness.

O God of all grace, help us even at this hour to abhor the evil and love the good; to cleanse our hands and purify

our hearts. We shall only be right with Thee when we are right with our fellow-men; when we do justly and love mercy; when we give to all their dues; when we forgive as we would be forgiven; when we refuse to be partakers of unjust gain, and partners in social and civic wrongs, — when we use this world as not abusing it. We pray not to be taken out of the world, but to be kept from the evil.

So for ourselves and for others may we consecrate the life that now is. Living in helpful sympathy with humanity, and in loving obedience to all divine laws of body and spirit, may our life blend with the life of man on earth and of God in heaven. Then shall we know that God's heaven is here, — that His tabernacle is with His children.

But O Father, help us to count the dark and trying things of life among Thy gifts and our treasures. If there is to be loss, pain, bereavement, and if the

cup of bitterness may not pass from us except we drink it, have we not said a thousand times, "Thy will be done"? May those great words of the brave Sufferer of Gethsemane become our real prayer. In all these things may we be more than conquerors through faith in Thy perfect love.

O Lord, what do we here? No living word will reach us, unless Thou shalt speak. Our life will be a kind of death, unless Thy breath enters. We shall go away as we came, unless Thou art one of our little company. But in Thy light we shall see; in Thy peace we shall rest; and with the light of Thy countenance upon us we shall sing, "This is the day the Lord hath made: we will be glad and rejoice in it." AMEN.



GRACIOUS Giver of Life! Almighty to create, almighty to renew! We would adore and thank and trust Thee as the Author of our being, and the living Power above, behind and within the world.

How much is being done for us and in us when we know it not! And are not our aspirations for a better life the signs of the Real Presence and the kindly drawing? Who but the All-Knowing and All-Loving can so find the secret ways to our inmost heart, and to the deep below the deeps of conscious being!

We bow in praiseful gratitude for every stirring of pure desire; for every disclosure of truth to our minds; for every soft whisper of reproof, correction, comfort or encouragement. And we thank Thee too for the shadows of misgiving and bewilderment that fall whenever we stray in ignorance or in wilfulness from the upward path.

O forgive the stupid heedlessness that takes a thousand gifts, and yet forgets the Giver! Forgive the blindness of distrust, and the hardness of heart, that keep us from knowing when good cometh!

We pray for the peace the world cannot give, and which we cannot give ourselves. But we dare not wish for peace without purity,—the false peace of the unawakened soul. If we have wandered and still wander from the right way; if other lords have had dominion over us, enslaving us to the love of pleasure or praise; if we have cared for the worldly and carnal more than for the spiritual; if we have sought ease or safety by selfish or timid avoidance of self-denying toil and duty; if we have been ungentle or unjust, resentful or censorious,—O forgive Thy penitent children! We seek no excuse or cloak for our sins; but would humbly confess and heartily forsake

them, and walk henceforth in newness of life.

But how sweet is the privilege of confession when we may confess to Thee, O Lover of souls! Our only hiding-place from shame and confusion of face is in that fatherly love which delights to pardon the penitent. Then comes new strength to cast off the weight of hindering habit and besetting sin; then even our little faith becomes a conquering power; then we stand erect and walk in freedom.

We do not pray to be taken out of the world, but to be kept from its evils; that amid exposures to moral contagion we may be kept immune by the purity of our own spirits. Save us from cowardly or careless conformity to hurtful customs and social lies. Save us too from the miserable self-righteousness which thanks God that it is not as other men. Mindful of our own faults and failures,

may we never look with contempt upon the ignorance or the errors of others, nor with a hard eye on those who have but stumbled in the path where we in weakness stood. May we have wisdom and power to win straying souls, and find in generous and unselfish love the key which opens hearts to saving truth.

May the example of all faithful people inspire us to faithfulness; to patient endurance and wise performance; and in the world's wide field may we sow some good seed for future harvests. So not for ourselves alone would we pray and labor; but would live and die in the spirit of him who gave himself for his brethren. So receiving and imparting heavenly gifts, may we become sharers in the mediatorial work through which Thou dost redeem and bless the world AMEN.



SOVEREIGN LORD and Gracious Father! May we meet as a company of spirits around the Throne. In awe and humility we own the rebuke of the holiness we feel should be our own, but which we have not attained. In tremulous, childlike trust we take refuge in the tender mercy which is over all. What will become of our fears, our sorrows, and our sins, if we but half believe in the invitations of Thy love? Beholding, even in reflected human forms, as in Jesus, the fulness and freedom of that love, may we be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Amid uncounted mercies, we thank Thee that we are not content to be what we are; that we are stirred with hunger and thirst for a righteousness which exceeds our own unworthy past and the low standards of conformity in the church and in the world. We would come under

that divine discipline which is the school of excellence. We would mount on and up, climbing whatever hills of difficulty may lead toward the spiritual summits where the air is more pure and the vision more wide and clear. We pray for that deeper faith which bears fruit in a more lively and loving obedience.

Is it indeed Thy good pleasure to give us the Kingdom, by sharing with us Thy wisdom and love and power? Even to-day may we hear and heed the high calling to enter into the heavenly glory of a righteous life. As Thy sons and daughters, may we put off all that is unworthy of us, and put on all that becomes our rank, ever leaving the things that are behind, ever reaching to the things that are before. We would join the glorious procession of the children of light, the faithful people who in all ages and under many names have borne aloft the standard of their unseen King.

We give thanks for the helpful cheer and courage of fellow-travelers along the path of life; for our part in the great fellowship of aspiring souls. As we would follow the leadership of Jesus in worship and service, so would we be baptized into the same spirit of divine sonship, till we shall gain the assurance of oneness with the indwelling Father.

We thank Thee for open or secret communion with our fellow-beings, in our homes, in our friendships, in our communities, in the church of our love, in the nation of which we are a part, and in this great human world. May the spirit of good will and the laws of welfare become more real to us and to all people, that they may find their happiness under shelter of Thy law and love.

May our sympathy for our fellow-sinners and sufferers, and for all the toiling and struggling multitudes of earth, never be weakened by self-interest or self-

righteousness, by unbrotherly pride or bigotry, by the false maxims of the world, or the low value men set upon their own nature. And when the moral temperature is low, and the love of many waxes cold, may our affections be kept alive and warm by a love like that of Christ shed abroad in our hearts.

And what shall this hour do for us, O Thou in whose name we meet and pray? May the truths of life come to us, not in word only, but in power. May we carry hence a fresh impression of the good of life, a new confidence in our spiritual resources, and a firmer purpose to follow the light, which comes from Thee and leads to Thee. AMEN.

ALMIGHTY LORD of heaven and earth; forever hidden in Thy self-existent being, dwelling in the light which no man can see; yet forever manifest in Thy creation and in the souls where Thy greatest work is done! Behold, we are Thine offspring! We accept our intelligence as a ray of Thy shining, and our aspiration as an interview with Thy spirit. We crave to be in communion with Thee and with all who are Thine. In the clasp of hands, in the fellowship of hearts, and in this high and sacred privilege of common prayer and praise, may we feel the pulsations of the Universal Life.

As our thoughts wander up and down eternity — back through infinite ages, forward through infinite ages; or as we gaze upward into immensity, vainly striving to fathom the awful depths, thick strewn with shining worlds; we seem both lost and found in the vastness

of the universe. Overcome with the sense of our littleness, we are yet exalted by a sense of our greatness; for to us is given the vision of sublimity, though the constellations are blind to their own splendors.

And the place where we stand is holy ground,— the earth is one of the stars of God! We are a part of the general assembly of spirits who bow reverently to a common Father, as sharers of the love that is impartial, unpurchased, universal and everlasting. May our reverence for that awful Presence never be weakened by familiarity nor be degraded into the boldness which is profanity. Yet, as happy children, dwelling with the Father, may we be calm and strong, fearless and true, trustful and glad.

May this filial feeling nourish our sense of fraternity, uniting us with each other and with all our fellow-beings. May it stir in us kindly thoughts of

those who do us good and those who do us evil; of those who walk in the light and those who seem to love the darkness; so that we may be like Him who sends the impartial sunshine and rain.

Give us deep sympathy with human nature and a clear vision of human needs. May we join heart and hand with all who are enlisted in the Holy War against ignorance and superstition, against intemperance and vice, against injustice and violence, the world around. May we put on the whole armor, and fearlessly trust to the power of truth and love for victory over every form of darkness and wrong.

May we act the hero's part, not alone in the world's broad and noisy field of battle, but in the silent and solitary struggles of the soul, where only invisible crowns are won; in the struggle of passion and selfishness, of evil habit and false tradition, against the demand

of higher standards and advancing ideals.

Is it too much to ask of Thee and of ourselves, that when tempted in all points, we may yet be without sin? Even in sorest conflict and darkest hours, may a strong, sweet voice come sounding down to us from the wilderness, the garden and the cross, "Be of good cheer: I have overcome." So with the conquering Christ may we ascend to share the throne and glory of the Father. AMEN.

UR FATHER, O our Father!
With what happy confidence
should we speak that glorious
Name! But not with careless presump-
tion may we rush into that presence
where higher spirits may fear to tread,
and veil their faces.

O Lord, what is man that Thou art
mindful of him, or the son of man, that
Thou visitest him! Yet Thou art mind-
ful of him; Thou dost visit him, dealing
mercifully with the creature of Thy
hand. For Thou hast made us; and it is
not like Thee to make, and then for-
get or forsake. Thus the high and holy
One, who inhabits eternity, dwells also
with the lowly; He lights up the dark
mind; He sets up His white throne in the
conscience of the child. For the inspira-
tion of the Almighty giveth understand-
ing to the simple; and this little earth is
the scene where He publishes the law of
His will and the gospel of His love.

Blessing and thanksgiving and dominion and power and glory be unto our God forever!

What is there, O Eternal One, what is there in all the heaven of heavens, or in the unspeakable holiness and perfection of Thy being, what is there in its awful depth and mystery; in the incomprehensible splendor of the Godhead, what is there of which Thou hast not planted a germ in the heart of our hearts! Here is set the witness of Thyself; here is the power and glory of the Real Presence! God is forever with man, and the human is made to be a partaker of the divine nature. In our darkness shines the Light we do not comprehend, though it lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

O Spirit of Truth! teach us to know ourselves, that we may come to some knowledge of Thee. Let the Eternal

Word be made flesh, that in seeing our sonship we may find the indwelling and inworking Father. We shall know Thee only as Thine own pure life, unfolding within, subdues and refines all lower elements, and brings thought into harmony with truth, feeling into harmony with love, and will into harmony with righteousness. Then will the greatest of all the sons of God not be ashamed to call us friends and brothers and fellow heirs.

And now, O Thou whose delight is in the sons of men, and who givest ungrudgingly and without upbraiding, may we who freely receive as freely give. May we find our own completeness by losing ourselves in the common life of nature and humanity. Help us to make of this church, and of all the associations we share in the home, the school, the city, the land, and the wide world, so many provinces of the kingdom of

heaven. May our part be a ministry of love, a miniature of Thy universal providence. The blessing will be ours; the praise shall be Thine forever. AMEN.



SPIRIT of the living God, Spirit of power and peace, Spirit of wisdom and of love! be Thou the spirit of our prayer and our praise; be Thou the very breath of our worship. May we indeed lift up our hearts unto the Lord through the gracious influence that draws us upward, turning our thoughts away from the common cares of life. May we enter into the divine life. May we find ourselves communing with the Most High. May we meet as at Thy mercy seat. May we come anew into the covenant which binds human spirits to the Divine.

We come with words of thanksgiving, for there has been no moment of all our lives when Thou hast forgotten and forsaken us, though we have often forgotten and forsaken Thee. We come with words of confession, for Thou knowest how far we are below that standard which Thou hast set before us. O if we

still wander, may Thy spirit come to lead us home. May it come to show us the way to Thee and Thy forgiveness.

We thank Thee for each other, for the human hearts by which we live, for all their tenderness and joys and tears, for all the sacred bonds of fellowship and companionship and friendship, for human relationship which binds us as in one family with Thee as our Father. May the sense of the brotherhood lift us up to Thee and join us in holy relations with each other, so that we may live together day by day in truth and love and simple faithfulness, in cheerful companionship along the upward road. May we make it easier for all to live in freedom and in gladness. May we do nothing that shall sadden or darken or hinder or mislead any human soul by our own unfaithfulness.

All the world is in Thy hands, Thou seest the end from the beginning. Thou

who art the God of the troubled nations, Thou carest for all Thou hast made. Teach mankind Thy law and Thy gospel, that unkindness and injustice everywhere may give way to good will and brotherhood.

We thank Thee for every high example which teaches the kinship of the human to the divine,—for all godly men and women, and for the hints of Thy nearness given in the innocent trust of the little ones. We thank Thee for the inspiring leadership of Thy great Son and our brother, who has opened for us a kingdom not of this world, which yet makes the earth a holy place, where crowns may be won through crosses. May we grow braver and stronger for our little trials as we remember how calmly he met the storm of brutal violence, not fearing them who could only kill the body, but looking through things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal, and so

tasting death for every man that every man might have a more abundant life.

So teach us in the spirit of Christ to overcome evil with good. May we never doubt the victory of righteousness. And so, here and now, we consecrate our lives, we consecrate our pleasures and our pains, our joys and our sorrows; praying that we may learn the true wisdom, and that by patient continuance in well-doing we may so number our days as to grow more fit for the higher service. AMEN.



LIVING and loving One, forever making all things new in heaven and earth and in our little lives! we are together to-day to seek for such renewal,—the renewal of our faith and hope and love; a clearer sight of truth; a better understanding of duty; a deeper realization of the goodness of the world; a higher valuation of our own souls and of our brother men.

We can offer no plea but our emptiness and need, and Thine exceeding, exhaustless love. We are humbled as we confess to ourselves and to Thee the poor use we have made of abounding blessings and our small return for unfailing generosity. We have misused the strength given us by bearing useless burdens. We have walked in shadows, because we have turned away from the light. We have failed, because we did not try to do our best. We have kept ourselves in ignorance, because we have

neglected instruction and despised reproof.

All the more do we bring to Thee our stained and faulty lives, for the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Besides Thee there is no saviour; but with Thee is mercy and plentiful redemption. If we ask, we shall receive; if we seek, we shall find; if we knock, the door will be opened. And is it not Thine own drawing which brings us near to such a throne of grace? O help us to drop our burdens at Thy feet and to forgive ourselves; to forget our sins along with our poor little virtues, as we take up in Thy strength the new line of life to which we have ever been called by the inward voice.

Behold Thy servants, who wait to learn and do Thy will. Henceforth may that will be ours. If we have been absorbed and buried alive in poor self-interests, if we have foolishly followed

paths that lead nowhere, in pursuit of pleasures that weary and gains that turn to losses, Thou knowest it was because we were only blind.

But now Thou dost touch our eyes and we see. Now would we put away our silly pride, and pray to enter the kingdom as little children—as children of the light, and companions of those who walk abroad in the white garments of innocence.

God of mercy, may not these things be? May we not lay aside every weight of hindering habit and besetting sin, and run the race with firmness of foot and gladness of heart? May we not feel the love which is in the heart of law, enjoy the glorious freedom of willing service, and know that duty is another name for delight in the yoke that has become easy?

Not for ourselves alone would we seek this spiritual renewal, but would accept

it as a preparation for service in the spirit of him who sanctified himself that he might the better serve both the brotherhood and the Fatherhood. For this cause, we too would take our place in the world, and help to fill the ever-growing measure of those heaven-inspired labors and sacrifices which must surely bring in a better day for all mankind, and crown Thy new creation with peace on earth and glory in the highest. AMEN.



HOLY Spirit, Lord and Giver of life! we are ever with Thee, as the objects of loving care. Thy power, wisdom and goodness wait on us continually. O wonder of wonders — that the Lord of the universe thus stoops to be the servant of his creatures! O pervade us with such a sense of our kinship to the Highest and Best as shall win us away from the things that disturb and distract, the things that depress and degrade, and raise us to that state of light and purity which is the health of our spirits. If indeed Thou art present with us here, if Thou dost beset us behind and before and lay on us a loving hand, may we know it; may we rest in the sweet assurance, and be glad in the Lord.

May the world in which Thou hast placed us shine around us like a revelation. In the wealthy treasure-house of what we call Nature, may we find di-

vine messages and meanings; may the mystery and wonder and beauty of creation be a reflection and interpretation of Thy being and our own. Above, around, beneath, within,—in the natural and the spiritual, the human and the divine — may we see and feel the unity of the order, the law and the life.

So may the shows and shadows of sense help us to understand the reality of the Universal Soul; and the things seen and temporal unfold into parables of things unseen and eternal. Then shall we see Thy face looking forth from all human faces; we shall mourn and hate the sins which mar Thine image. Then shall we reverence Thy wisdom as it blossoms and shines in all forms of knowledge, all inventions and arts of beauty and use; all provisions and industries by which the earth yields sustenance and comfort to Thy creatures. Then shall we shun and abhor the abuses of human power, by

which Thy blessings are turned into curses and Thy children rob themselves and each other of the common inheritance.

But we thank Thee that our inheritance is ever growing; that we are heirs of all the ages; that we have come into possession and use of the toilsome gains of those who have gone before us. May we not waste these precious stores of good; but transmit to other generations the great estate, unimpaired, improved and with fewer incumbrances of evil.

We thank Thee most of all for the heavenly light and life; for the inspirations, coming through the ages, to enlighten the mind of man, to show him that which is good, to warn and reprove, to restrain and reclaim, to purify his heart, to uplift and enrich his life. How many wise teachers Thou hast sent, how many prophets and anointed ones, to help us read Thy handwriting in Nature and in our own deeper being!

Every power, every faculty, every glimpse of truth,—lo it comes of the wise Lord, rich in mercy, wonderful in working! Surely Thou art greater and better than our childish thought, and we see but a little part of Thy ways! Yet have we been shown the path of a good life; we have been taught a religion divinely human; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and that He would have us be good to each other, finding it doubly blessed to receive and to give.

And in Thine own good time we trust to be received to the greater company and the higher service, in the spirit-home for which Thy grace and truth can prepare us, and which Thou hast been preparing for us from eternity. AMEN.



GOD of purity and peace, God of light and freedom, God of comfort and joy! We praise Thee; we acknowledge Thee to be the only Lord. Humbled and lifted up, may we sit together as in heavenly places, and find to-day a Sabbath of the Soul.

We wait in our ignorance for messages from the Spirit; messages of divine instruction, of caution and correction, of pardon and encouragement. We wait in our blindness for visions; for the opening of our eyes that we may see the wonderful things of Thy law and Thy love. We wait in our infirmity and impurity for the healing and cleansing touch. We would not go away no wiser or better than we came; we would ask and receive that inward renewal that shall bear fruit in a better life.

In our hunger for these new blessings we would not forget to thank Thee that hitherto we have been dealt with in

ways of kindness which we have not earned or deserved; because Thou dost pity our needs as a Father pitieth his children; and dost comfort our unreasonable murmurings as one whom his mother comforteth.

And how many are Thy thoughts to us-ward! What large outlays of power and wisdom have been lavished for the welfare of body and spirit! What generous provisions in nature and in grace! What day or night has gone over our heads, in which we have been left to ourselves with no divine supply! To Thee the darkness and the light have been alike; and when our way has led through shadows, no shadow has darkened Thy countenance, even though for us the sun grew black. "In what great need has not the merciful God spread His wings over his children!"

Our great needs continue, and we seek the never-failing grace,—the wis-

dom which guides, the strength which supports, the love which comforts and cheers, the sound mind and right spirit. We covet that sanity and serenity by which we shall live above distractions, — in the world, yet above it. May the heart be at rest while mind and hands are busy. Out of the heavenly fulness, may we have light and power and peace to give.

Where have we learned this high lesson of helpfulness so well as in the school of One who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life for the deliverance of mankind from every form of evil? More and more deeply would we receive of the Spirit with which he was anointed, and which has made his brief life so fruitful a seed of good, in the field of humanity; more and more would we receive that we may impart, counting nothing as wholly our own.

In that spirit may our prayers and toils be given for the spread of truth and righteousness in the earth. May we hold nothing back, but lay all on the altar of a happy, hearty service—our time, our strength, our means—devising and doing liberal things; and by faithfulness over a little winning the approval which comes every day and forever to the good and faithful servant. AMEN.

ALMIGHTY MAKER! Righteous Ruler! Merciful Father! May we come to Thee in deep humility and reverence, yet with the glad freedom and confidence of those who know in whom they have trusted. We rejoice that no thought of ours is concealed; that every secret of the heart lies open to a kindly Eye. Childish little thoughts we offer Thee; and sometimes sad little secrets; — burdens we would gladly unload. How freely may we speak to Thee of every thing!

And now we come to seek counsel from the Wisdom that is ever gentle and easy to be entreated. We bring to the mercy seat our deep perplexity over the awful problem of evil in Thy world. In the dreadful aspects of disorder in Nature and in human life, we know not how to trace the presence and ordering of a benignant wisdom. We know Thee as the Comforter of sorrow; dare

we think of Thee as its cause? Why should not Almighty Goodness restrain the forces that work havoc and destruction, and inflict on Thy helpless creatures what to us seems like needless and useless suffering? And if we had Thy love and power, should we not turn the hearts of men away from the mad impulses and savage passions that wreck the happiness of mankind? Does not all that is best in us rise up to ask: Where is the fatherly God? And out of the silent sky there comes no answer. Clouds and darkness are round about Thee; Thy footsteps are in the great waters. And how dare we ask Thee to give account of thyself to Thy creatures!

Not the less do we trust that justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne. Thou dost not mock the desire and demand of our hearts that the world shall be ruled in righteousness. Some comforting voice assures us that if we

could see and know all, we should rest in a conviction that all is good; and that even our unanswered questions are in the large order of Providence. And still we walk by faith where we cannot walk by sight; still we wait for the clearer light as those that watch for the morning. From earthquake, fire and storm, we turn to the still small voice.

Most of all would we trust and thank Thee that amid all mysteries there is light on the path of our life; that there is a Power, not ourselves, yet in ourselves, that makes for righteousness and truth and love; and that even the wrongs and sufferings within and around us are like a divine call to take sides with the right as we see it, and to be fellow-workers with God in the still unfinished creation.

When the seas roar and are troubled, may we not lose our confidence that He that sits upon the floods is mightier than many waters; that the world is in better

keeping than ours; that the counsels and purposes of the Eternal shall not fail, nor the processes of evolution be checked by any folly of the creatures; and that not even the least of them can fall out of Thy hand, O God of the little sparrow!

We thank Thee that the bright blue sky is above all clouds; that the clouds, too, do their errand and hasten away; and that through the changing lights and shadows, we are taken along with the moving world. In all our looking outward and inward, upward and downward, forward and backward, may we be unscared by any facts, and go about our Father's business, lending heart and hand to our proper work of overcoming evil with good, within and without. So in body and spirit may we glorify Thee in Christ-like ministries of mercy, and in the furtherance of that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy. AMEN.



OD of all compassion! We turn to Thee as to the fountain of health for body and spirit. Thou knowest how often, in weakness, want and woe, heart and flesh cry out for the living God. May we not believe that it is the divine order that Thine earth-children should be well and happy, sound of flesh and sane of mind, enjoying a fullness of life? Are not the laws and conditions of our well-being appointed by a wisdom that cannot err?

Thou knowest, for Thou hast caused us to know, through what long and costly experiences of failure and pain these laws and conditions are being learned by mankind. Thou knowest, as we partly know, the dangers to which we are exposed in this dimly-lighted scene of trial and temptation,—dangers from our own low development, from the heedless ignorance which misses good things, from defects of nature, taints of

blood, and from surroundings of contagious evil.

Thou knowest our frame. Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves; and hast made us with this strange mixture of dust and a living soul, which only Thou canst understand. Dost Thou not look with compassion on weak, wayward and unskilful children, who are yet Thine own? We would draw nigh to Thee for guidance, grateful if even our stumbling may be upward, and if through the discipline of suffering we may slowly advance along the path to perfection.

Beside Thee there is no Saviour, none to deliver. No hurt of body or soul was ever healed except by the only Power that can give life. Disease and sin,—the cure for both is provided by the gentle grace which worketh in us better than we know how to ask or think. Yet the beautiful miracle is wrought by the means which Thou hast provided; by

the faith which works, and the knowledge which is to be sought for as a hidden treasure.

We thank Thee for the spreading light of that wisdom which is profitable to direct; for the victories of science; for the increasing resources of the soul and its growing mastery of the body; for every good physician and wise counselor; for the ministry in sick-rooms of human angels; and for the large and rational measures which look toward the prevention of physical disease and the removal of causes of misery, and the more general diffusion of knowledge and means of welfare. Above all, may the teachers of religion and the Church, which is the pillar of the truth, testify in word and in power to the present fulness of that divine wisdom and love which is the saving health of all nations.

May we hear and heed the high calling to present body and spirit blame-

less, as a living sacrifice, more worthy of
Thine acceptance than all the slain ani-
mals that smoked on ancient altars.
And when flesh and heart fail, and we
bear no longer the image of the earthly,
may we be prepared to bear at last the
image of the heavenly. AMEN.



VER-LIVING, ever-loving,
ever present Father! We would
join in the prayer of the ages. O
send out Thy light and Thy truth! Let
them lead us; let them bring us to Thy
holy hill, and to Thy dwelling-place!
Then where Thy spirit is, our spirits
may be also. Only in Thy light may we
hope to see; only by Thy guidance may
we hope to be led in the true path of life.

We go astray for want of sound knowl-
edge and discretion. We perish for lack
of understanding. What risks we have
run, what wrongs we have done, be-
cause we have walked in darkness! O if
we sincerely desire to know the truth,
and to make it the light of our life, is
not such desire a breath of the very Spirit
of Truth, and a pledge that if we seek
we shall find? A message from heaven
seems to come to us through him who
said: "If any man lack wisdom let him
ask of God, who giveth to all liberally

and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Thou knowest our lack; well is it for us that we know it, and that we may come as hungry seekers.

All our honest thinking is our prayer for light; all our rational study; all our teachable listening to the words of the wise, as they bring forth out of their treasures things new and old. How blessed are the eyes that see, and the ears that hear! How blessed is the light that shows the way, and the way the light has shown! O Lord, we cannot thank Thee enough for the treasures of knowledge by which our age is enriched and glorified; and for the ever open heaven out of which pours around us such a glory of illumination and revelation!

And now we pray less for an increase of light and more for the eye to see. How many a time light has come, and men have loved darkness! O make us bravely willing to see whatever the light

may show of imperfection, of folly, of error, of evil; willing to see how far we are below the standard we know; willing to see how all good things are hindered or wasted by our indolence, our too-easy self-approval, our cowardly conformity; willing to see our need to learn the better way and to unlearn the traditions that have had their day, the methods that are no longer best, and the habits that enslave us to an unworthy past.

As knowledge grows from more to more, may more of reverence hallow and consecrate this rich possession to beautiful human uses. Save us from holding the truth in unrighteousness. May we not be like the servant, who, knowing his master's will, yet chooses his own way; like the forgetful hearer who is not a doer of the work. We have been taught in the school of Jesus, and have seen divine light in the faces which Thou hast illuminated. And Thou hast

shined in our hearts, O Teacher of all the teachers!

O prepare in this church and in all the churches a people who shall be a light to the world. From mind to mind, and from land to land, as from beacons on the mountains, may truth's illumination spread until all the dark places shall be lighted up, and the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. AMEN.



HOLY, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Before the awfulness of the throne that is high and white, heaven and earth might well flee away from our thoughts, and leave us abased in the sense of our nothingness. Yet how mercifully dost Thou hide Thyself from our finite vision and temper to our eyes that glory which none can see, and live! How gently are Thy splendors veiled, yet revealed, in our conscious being, and as they shine softly out through the wonders of creation! What secret things of nature and of grace may be shown to the soul that knows Thy love! We thank Thee that only the pure can see! We ask that greatest gift which meets our deepest need: Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew in us a right spirit!

It doth not yet appear to us what we shall be; it doth not yet appear to us what we are. Yet faintly we hear some

inner whisper that we are now the children of God, and that when we grow into His likeness, we shall see and know, as always we are seen and known. Help us to put away all our pride of self-derived intelligence and power, that we may enter the kingdom of our own true life in the simplicity and trust of little children, who never doubt or question the all-sufficient wisdom and goodness in which they have their being.

How much of good Thou hast in reserve for us as we grow in divine knowledge and grace! O that we may greatly believe! We welcome the Teacher who chides us for our little faith in the heavenly Father. May we no longer measure Thy riches by our poverty, nor limit by our own small receivings the wisdom and love and power which may come to us from Thy gracious fulness.

O for the more abundant life! O for the faith which shall be at least like the

grain of mustard-seed, which, because it is alive, may grow like a tree! What truths now hidden may flash upon the open eyes! What power to do the greater works may come to those who are faithful over a few things! What victories over all the powers of evil may make us more than conquerors through Him that loves us, if we put on the whole of our spiritual armor!

O that we may leave the things that ought to be behind,—leave our poor past and poor present,—leave our dull plodding along the common levels, and trust ourselves to the wings of faith and hope to bear us up to the higher realms and the purer air!

Forgive the selfishness that makes our prayers profane! How often have we asked amiss, as if the impartial Giver could treat us as favorites! May a purer spirit prompt us to seek no blessing, great or small, which we could not

sincerely wish for every one of Thy family and ours! For their sakes, for worthier service, and that in us Thy perfect will may be done, do we pray for all the gifts and graces and attainments that may qualify us to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

Prepare us as a people — prepare all who call on Thy name — to shine as lights in the world. In the faith and faithfulness of Jesus, in his obedience to the Spirit, and in his love of the least of his brethren, may we live and labor for the day when Thy saving health shall be known in all the earth. AMEN.



FATHER of mercies, ever-waiting to be gracious, O give us to-day a season of refreshment for body and soul! In our thoughts and our communion may earth draw near to heaven. With joy may we draw water out of the wells of salvation. May we know how good it is for man to bow before his Maker in reverence and gratitude, in penitence and trust; how good it is for a whole assembly to join in the giving of thanks, in singing hymns of praise, and in meditating on the higher things of the Spirit.

May the Song of songs break from our lips and our hearts. We have caught it from the glorious gospel of the blessed God—the good-tidings of a love which overfills the heavens and floods the earth with a salvation which reaches to the uttermost and the lowermost. A Great Light shines down to those who sit in the darkness of ignorance and error, or in

the deeper darkness of perversion and sin.

We have heard of the Lamb in the midst of the throne. We have believed that Love is at the heart of the government which is over all worlds and all souls. We have been told of a pure river of water of life, that proceeds from the Throne; we have believed that whosoever will may drink of that exhaustless stream. We have been taught that the throne and kingdom may be set up in an obedient soul, and that within the believer a fountain may be opened which shall be in him like a well of water springing up into everlasting life. O satisfy our thirst, even to-day, from that everflowing source of grace and truth.

In Thy being are heights above heights, and deeps below deeps, which we may not measure or fathom. But it is good to know that Thy greatness has room for our littleness, and that in Thee

our being may live and move in light and freedom and joy. May the assurance that we are beloved of God open our eyes to see the sacredness of every human soul; may it inspire us with faith in ourselves, in the high uses we may make of life, and in the grand possibilities of our destiny.

Father, is it Thy good pleasure that the kingdom of God should become the kingdom of man? When we seem most fully self-possessed and self-directed, as if we could go alone, as if each son of Thine had been set up with life in himself, O then help us to realize that only in Thee we have our being; that no son can do anything save by union with the indwelling Father; that we walk in largest liberty only when Thy light shines and Thy law is enthroned in the reason and the will we call our own.

So close is God to man! May we know it, feel it, rest in it, and rejoice in

it! May we commit ourselves in humble confidence to the unseen Power which is ever busy in all the processes of matter and spirit — the Power behind the evolution of worlds and souls. May the message which makes of law itself a gospel of good-will — the message of in-working, all-purifying, all-saving love — not reach us merely as a half-spent echo of ancient tradition, preserved only in time-worn forms; may it come to our hearts to-day as the living word of the living Spirit, with penetrating power and winning sweetness. May it go all abroad among mankind as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; as the truth that makes men free; as the love which casts out fear; as the peace of God which passes all human thought; and as the very God of peace, reconciling all things to Himself, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. AMEN.



GREAT CREATOR, Preserver and Benefactor! We praise and bless Thee for the heavens above and for the earth beneath; that we are gifted with eyes to look upward and around; that we are ever in the presence of visible wonders and glories that bear witness to the invisible One. Vainly have we sought Thee in the blank spaces of our own poor thoughts; yet, as in a glass darkly, we are given in nature some glimpses of Thy being and our own. As we ponder and wonder, the deep meaning dawns upon our feeling and our thought: Thou art over all, in all, and through all. It is Thy light in which we see; Thy light shining in through the senses, Thy light shining out through the soul.

We bless Thee for enlightening and enriching our race with those gifted minds that have meditated most deeply on the facts and meaning of the world,

tracing therein Thy creative thought, and helping us to read its sacred parables. We bless Thee for the anointed ones who have told us their vision of its order and beauty, and for the bards who have caught for us some strains of the universal anthem.

May our minds be so illuminated by sound knowledge that the lurking phantoms of error and superstition may vanish like idle dreams of the night. May we learn to live in Thy world with no servile and degrading fear, but with the happy confidence of the dutiful child at home. Forgive the blind unbelief which banishes Thee to a distant heaven; forgive the atheism that makes of the earth a profane and accursed place, and leaves us without God in the world, in wretched orphanage and pauperism; afraid even of the awful Eye that looks on us from afar, and seeking for ourselves no higher good than the selfish

enjoyment of things that must perish in the using. We have wronged ourselves and Thee by burrowing in the earth and finding our chief treasure in looking and living downward.

Yet surely we have not loved Thy world too well, though unwisely. How good it is to be here on this round globe among the stars! Here Thou hast set us amid the scenes and sounds of Nature; here it is that we see human faces and hear human voices; here we are taught the lessons of self-help and mutual service; here every faculty and power of body and mind is put to a school of practice; here we may find the beginnings of every thing we yet know how to hope or pray for, in a higher and advancing state of being. In yielding to the charm of the earthly life are we not drinking of the river of Thy pleasures? If Thou hast looked on this outer creation and pronounced it good, if

Thou dost delight in the works of Thy hands, what tender grace it is that invites us to share both the spectacle and the joy of possession!

We thank and praise the all-loving One for our part in the innocent and sportive pleasure of all creatures that live in the light and air, and take their food unknowingly from the unseen Hand; and that we are made capable of a healthy-minded and healthy-bodied satisfaction in the things of time and sense. May a just and kind feeling toward all our fellow-inhabitants of the earth save us from the wrong of making the lowliest life less happy. While we destroy whatever is noisome or injurious, may the dominion Thou hast given to man never be abused by wanton cruelty.

May we give due honor to our own bodies, as servants and temples of the spirit. May we so rule all appetites and passions, by reason and for use,

that the flesh may help and not hinder the soul. May no carnal grossness or sensual surfeit blind us to the beauty of the world; may no lure of its beauty make us deaf to the voice of truth and right, or the calls of humanity. May our life not be a discordant note in the harmony of creation; may we never darken the sunlight for our companions by our glooms, our complainings or our unkindness, lest the sweet earth be cursed by our sin and bring forth briars and brambles. Rather, by the wise culture of the garden of our common nature and by the better use of our material and spiritual resources, may the waste places be reclaimed and the desert made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Grant that by using this world as not abusing it, we may live in it, yet above it, winning heavenly profit from these mixed experiences of pleasure and pain, of toil and repose, of temptation and re-

sistance, of failure and recovery; so that by the riches of grace all things may work together for good, and this little earthly life be a stepping-stone to some higher stage of being. We ask all as those who have learned of the Father's love in the school of Jesus. AMEN.



CREATIVE SPIRIT! Thou hast peopled the earth and air and sea with countless living creatures that cannot know that their being is the continual gift of Infinite Love. Thy light shines in their darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. But what manner of love is bestowed upon those who can look upward, can call on Thy name, can even dare to count themselves Thy sons and daughters, and can aspire to be partakers of the divine nature!

O if we have ever been as the creatures that nourish only a blind life within the brain, we thank Thee that we have been wakened to a consciousness of our spiritual rank, and have been stirred by the breath of prayer. May we be caught up this morning into the company of all who worship Thee in spirit and in truth. How tenderly gracious is the assurance that the Father

seeketh such to worship Him! We seek Thee because we are sought; we come because we are drawn. O can it be, can it be, that even now and here the Real Presence is with us, that the heavenly light is shining in our minds, and the heavenly love is seeking to pervade our hearts! We cannot see far in the upward path; but we trust that one little step toward our higher destiny may be taken at this hour.

No more may we resist and quench the Spirit that seeks to raise our spirits. Why have we ever shrunk away in distrust, as if Thou couldst do us harm? Why have we ever doubted the perfect purpose of perfect Love? Thou knowest how little we know, or can do. Thou dost not upbraid or chide, since we are but as infants crying in the night. Yet little by little we seem left to ourselves, and made aware of our responsibility. For Thou hast endowed us with reason,

and with this awful freedom to choose between good and evil, between life and death. We need not think of ourselves as playthings of blind chance or iron fate, for it is ours to learn and love and obey a righteous law. Our wills are ours to make them Thine, so that as Thou dost draw nigh to us, we may draw nigh to Thee.

And now we would join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant. Henceforth may we serve Thee, not with slavish fear or selfish hope, but with the loving obedience of children at home in the Father's house, rejoicing in the light of His countenance, and trusting Him not the less when earth-born shadows hide His face.

In deep sincerity would we ask for counsel and guidance in this life of the spirit. Lord, what wouldst Thou have us to do? How shall we best fulfill the purpose of our being? How use the

powers and resources given us in trust? O for the wisdom and the will to do always the right thing, in the right way, and in the right spirit! Surely there is a place and a part appointed for us in the divine order; and we may welcome the more than human teaching which tells us that by lowly listening we shall hear the right word.

We thank Thee for all the helpful instructors and instructions of past and present, whereby we are taught to read the law and gospel written in our own hearts. May we learn of Jesus, whose spirit reached high for heavenly gifts that he might share them with his brethren. As we freely receive, may we freely give. So make us ministering angels of light and comfort, of purity and peace. To Thee, from whom all blessings flow, shall be all glory and praise, to-day and forevermore. AMEN.



O INVISIBLE Presence! Lord of all on earth and of all in heaven! None are great before Thee; none are too small to be under the sheltering care of that tender mercy which is over all Thy works. Is not our little company a part of the vast society of spiritual beings who live and move and have their being in Thee? Humbly and gladly we acknowledge and share the universal dependence, the universal need, the universal supply.

Turning away from all worldly lures and cares, we would forget our own unworthiness as we commune with that impartial Love which is kind even to the unthankful and the evil, and which sends sunshine and rain on the just and the unjust. May the things of God take possession of our thoughts and affections, of our faith and hope, and become an inward assurance of pardon and peace, of strength and comfort.

How large, how free and precious are Thy resources of grace and truth! How like the unveiling of divine glory is the light that shows us our way, our privileges and opportunities, from day to day! Even in our dim glimpses of the unfolding order of the world and of our life, do we not think Thy thoughts, and trace the wonder-workings of the Power which is not ourselves?

We rejoice that those who have received the larger measures of inspiration, and whose vision has been deeper and clearer than ours, have become our teachers and helpers, unlocking for us the mysteries hidden in our own being. We thank Thee for that one great Messenger who is chiefest among ten thousand; who has taught us through his divine sonship to believe in our own, in the inward Voice of the Spirit, in the rich possibilities of our destiny. May that pure love which men have seen as

God in Christ, drawing the world to himself, be felt also as God in us, working inmosty and outmosty, to carry on and complete the great reconciliation and to transform the children of earth into the children of heaven.

May this be to us all a day of salvation — the salvation which comes through faith working by love and purifying the heart! May we be released from the miserable bondage of self-will, from pride and anger, from sordid worldliness and unbrotherly greed, from the poor pleasures that degrade and the miseries we bring on ourselves, from the worries that waste and the glooms that shut out the light. May all evil spirits be cast out by the conquering power of the truth that makes free, and by the enthronement of heavenly affections in our hearts.

O prepare us in Thine own wise ways to be workers together with God and all

good people for the advancement of righteousness in the earth; and for the bringing in of that better day when those that sit in the dark places shall see the Great Light, when the degraded shall stand up as men, when wars shall cease, when there shall be none to hurt or destroy, and the nations shall come joyfully under the law of Brotherhood.

In our narrow sphere of thought and word and deed, help us to be simply true and faithful. Be in our lives as sweetness and purity, and as the gentle firmness of Jesus. May we enter more and more into possession of what Thou dost provide for body and soul. Amid the excitements and distractions of our city life, may we abide in that peace which the world cannot give or take away. And may neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, separate us from Thine everlasting love.
AMEN.



OUR FATHER who art in heaven, and whose presence makes a heaven of every humble and trusting heart! As living spirits quickened by Thy breath, may we dare seek communion with Him whose image we bear, and by whose name we are called? Low down as we are, may we hope to rise into light and freedom and joy? Thy doors stand open; the Voice that we have dreaded as that of a stern law-giver and awful judge melts into a tenderness of invitation, a call to purity and peace. Even in our wanderings, an invisible Hand has held and led us; even in our sense of self-reproach and shame, we are drawn to the mercy-seat.

How shall we thank Thee enough for the discipline of our mortal life; for the wholesome lessons taught in the school of common experience; for the trials through which we learn our limitations, our dangers and our need of the strength

which may be ours for the right asking, and by the right use of what we have! More than for any worldly good, would we be grateful for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. Never is Thy grace more richly manifest than when in our utmost weakness we are forced to draw on those forces of the soul which show that Thou art within us, even when we cry out as forsaken.

We thank Thee for the necessities of life; for the divine discontent which compels the training and use of our faculties; for the impulse to improvement and progress which will not let us pause long at any of the way-stations; for the Power everywhere at work to make the bad good and the good better; for the vital energy at work in body and mind to shed off the outworn, to renew and transform and regenerate. These too are parts of the ways of Him who is wonderful in working.

We pray for the quickening of our social sense — our feeling of relationship to one another and to mankind. Thou hast set us in the family; Thine are all the dear, domestic ties and the sacred bonds of friendship and civic order; the union of hearts and hands in industry and in the exchange of services and sympathies; Thine the spreading intercourse and acquaintance between the nations, so that no people can live in isolation and independence. For this great school of justice and good-will we give thanks to the Father of mankind.

We remember in our prayer those who are in any kind of sorrow or suffering, and count it a sweet privilege that we may sometimes comfort others as we are comforted of God. As we rejoice with the happy or weep with the sad, may both the pleasures and the pains of the common lot work in us a fitness and a readiness to meet wisely the ever-

coming occasions of helpfulness. Give us the wisdom that is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

O Spirit of truth, may the way of life be lighted up for all mankind! May we not only see and abhor the evil, but may we know how to overcome evil with good. Send us prophets and leaders who come not to destroy, but to fulfill. In the face of all confusion and error, fraud and violence, and of man's inhumanity to man, may we never lose our faith that right makes might, that truth and love are stronger than falsehood and hate, and that this is God's world through all generations. Thus shall Thy name be our strong tower and rock of defence. In that name may we set up our banners, fight the good fight of faith, and convert every defeat into victory. AMEN.



GOD, the all-glorious! Thy kingdom is over all; and Thy kingdom is wisdom and righteousness. Under the shelter of Thy law all worlds and souls abide; and Thy law is truth and love. Throughout Thy boundless realm, what can the highest or the lowest creatures do but turn adoringly to Thee, source and centre of life, fountain of every good! And how should we be humbled, yet how should we be exalted, as we come to take a place—the place that is given us—among the spirits who find their joy in ascribing blessing, and praise, and thanksgiving, and power, and dominion, and glory, to Him whose throne is everywhere and forever!

O that some vision of goodness, as well as of greatness, may pass before us while our spirits bow in awe and reverence! Not in terror, but in lowly exultation, would we ponder the mighty

mysteries; for it is Thy love which has bestowed the power of thought that our thoughts may soar to Thee, that our meditation may be sweet, and that we may be glad in the Lord, glad as little children to whom one ray of the Father's smile is all the heaven they need, and one crumb from His table is a banquet of delights.

O Lord, increase our faith! From such a Giver we can never ask too much. Giving doth not impoverish Thee; for what Thou givest is still Thine own. May the common blessings of every day and night move us to thanksgiving and inspire us with confidence to expect the higher gifts of the spirit; — the riches that do not perish; the bread which feeds the soul; the inward eye and ear that see the Face and hear the Voice; the wisdom which can guide us in the right way, and interpret to us the words of the wise and the parables written in

the open book of the world and in our own souls.

Thy Spirit is our breath of life. May we submit to the gracious influence. May its renewing and cleansing power penetrate and pervade our being. May it enlarge our capacity of receiving and enrich us with the joy of giving. As we could not bear to be separated from Thee, may we never willingly be separated from any whose lives we may share or to whose sorrows we may minister comfort. May we be ever ready to join hands with all who are busy in doing any part of Thy good work in the world.

To all lowly tasks may we bring the high motive and willing spirit that finds divine service in every-day occasions. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, may it be done in harmony with the laws of wisdom and the right use of our powers of body and mind. May our life, together or apart, in society or

in solitude, be a steady movement along the ways of truth and duty and purity.

Through all the changes of things seen and temporal, may our faith and life be held fast to the unseen and eternal; may our hope be as an anchor cast within the veil, whither so many a forerunner hath entered. Young and old, are we not all as Thy little children? Do not the sweet and sacred bonds which hold us to each other hold us also to all who are Thine, and to Thee, O Father of spirits.

As our morning sun climbs the sky, as the midday hours crowd with duties, as our little day declines and the shadows lengthen, in childhood and manhood, in age and death, and in the vast forever, O keep us still Thine own! Into Thy hands, into Thy hands alone, we commit our being and all our treasures, world without end. AMEN.

ALMIGHTY and All-merciful,
who art and wast and ever-
more shall be! So awful in
greatness and power, so tenderly near
in the fulness of love! Thy life-time is
from everlasting to everlasting; to Thee
the endless past and the endless future
are the ever-present. Our days and
years fly swiftly by, and do not return.
But how good it is to think of our little
being as folded safe in Thine infinity;
and that we may be trustful, care-free
and glad as the babe in the mother's
arms! We do not need to be wise or
strong; Thy wisdom and power are at
the service of Thy dependent creatures.
Thou dost beset us behind and before,
and carest for us even while we seem
to care for ourselves. Humbled and
shamed as we must be before the all-
seeing Eye, we yet rejoice that we can-
not hide or flee from Thy presence.

To us no moment is ever wholly clear;

yet into the little present are gathered all our memories and hopes; and the passing days open like the pages of a holy book. Our memories are catalogues of blessings, and they turn to assurances of more to come. Dearest of all memories it is that hitherto Thou hast helped; dearest of all hopes it is that Thou wilt never leave us to ourselves. In our pleasures and our pains, in our weakness and want, in our sorrows and sins, who else can be our constant friend?

But Thy friendship has come to us in many a human form; we have seen Thy smile in many a face, and felt Thy touch in the clasp of many a human hand. In the ways of honest toil, of innocent pleasures, and of common griefs, Thou hast walked with us, when we knew it not. Loved voices that have fallen into silence, dear presences that have vanished from our sight, yet visit

us in the watches of the night; and these too, are parts of Thy ways. We thank Thee for this human heart by which we live; for all its tenderness, its joys, its tears. O that we may learn by these mortal loves to ascend to a love like Thine, unsullied by selfishness or passion, unimpaired by infirmity or change.

But need we wait for death to open the gate of that purer love and better life? Is not the earth, also, one province of Thy kingdom, one mansion of the infinite dwelling? Will any good thing be withheld from Thy children here, if they walk uprightly and seek Thee with the whole heart? May not our affections be so clarified and refined, even by the burdens and trials we must bear together, and by our need of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, that we may love one another with a pure heart fervently, and do Thy will together on earth as higher spirits do it in heaven?

At every turn in our changing life, may we know that we are never alone. In accepting our lot and our duty, we take our place in the divine order. Be it to labor or to rest, to have much or little, to help or to be helped, to do or to endure, to enjoy or to suffer, to abide here or to go hence, Thy will be done! In loving whatever is truly good, we shall learn to love Thee, the All-good. Nature and humanity, justice and mercy, truth and righteousness, order and beauty, all are paths that lead to the Perfect One. In these paths may we hold our steady course, and find all our days bound each to each by natural piety, so that for ourselves and for mankind we may help to make of this mortal pilgrimage an upward journey to the hills of light and peace. AMEN.

AL MIGHTY and all-loving
Father, forever the blessed Giver
of blessings! Thou hast no
need of our praises or our prayers; we
have nothing but needs; we can only lift
empty hands to the Source of every
good. How precious is this privilege of
common prayer, in which we all unite
in a loving communion of gratitude and
trust, while each soul may be closeted
with Thee, and may receive according
to the inward and private need!

O if any of us come here to-day
downcast or careworn, discouraged or
bewildered, heartsore or sinsick, may
this church be a house of help and heal-
ing for mind and body. May the air of
this place be so charged with human
and divine sympathy that the contagion
of faith and hope and love may pass
from heart to heart. May the ever-pres-
ent grace of God which bringeth salva-
tion open here the fountain of cleansing

and comfort, from which flows peace to every troubled spirit.

Help us to realize that the conditions of human existence are appointed by a loving wisdom which takes full account of our weakness and ignorance, of our trials and temptations, and of the baffled aspirations and struggles which make a part of our daily history. May we not shrink from the sober discipline which is the price of excellence, and which compels us to draw on the God-given resources stored within our being. May we welcome these lessons in patience, in fortitude, and in sympathy with our fellow sinners and sufferers; may we profit from our training in that skilled labor of mind and hand which turns all power to wise uses for others and for ourselves.

We thank Thee that in this great school of life Thou art the Master of the masters; that the lessons we are set to

learn all lead to the love of truth, the practice of righteousness, and the increasing welfare of mankind. May we read largely in the Book of Nature and the growing Bible of the ages, discerning in our own life and the life of the world the ever-unfolding mystery of Thy purpose, and tracing everywhere the record of the busy Providence which brings order out of chaos and makes of evil the servant of good. May we trust Thy guiding hand in the events which give us pain; Thy wisdom working in the unwisdom of man; Thy love defeating all hatreds, and bringing ungodly and inhuman counsels to nought.

When Thou with rebukes dost chastise men and nations for iniquity, how awful are the strokes of justice! Thou wilt render to every man according to his works and wilt by no means clear the guilty. But Thou wilt mercifully clear the penitent of his guilt; and wilt by no means turn away

from any who turn away from sin to seek
Thee with the whole heart.

Still Thy world is shadowed by vast glooms of woe and sin; still in every land are dark places full of the habitations of cruelty; still the sad pitying Face looks from the cross on scenes of unbrotherly greed and strife. O that all whose souls are lighted by wisdom from on high may be moved by divine compassion to carry the words of life to those who dwell in the shadow of death. May every chain be broken and the downtrodden rise up as men in the joy of their natural heritage. May the bloodthirsty tiger of war no more devour the flesh of Thy poor children; may the growing demand for universal peace silence the cannon's brutal roar and bring in the Commonwealth of Human Brotherhood.

We pray for the welfare of the land of our love. We ask Thy blessing on the

President of the United States and on all who are in seats of authority. May the power they hold in trust be used for the restraint of evil and the maintenance of impartial justice. May the corruptions and wrongs that put us to shame give way before an aroused public conscience and a deeper sense of those equal rights which men of all conditions hold by a divine charter. May the unclean spirits of partisan bitterness, religious bigotry and racial hatred be cast out from all our communities and our hearts by Thine angel of good will.

Help us to preserve both liberty and union, the private right and the public order, our self-respect and our respect for each other. May Thy righteous laws be written in the hearts of the people, so that the spirit of wisdom and justice may write them in the ordinances and statutes of the land, and make them the sweet customs of our common life.

O God, whose gracious will it is that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved from evil, may this knowledge and salvation be ours, and may we ever walk before Thee as obedient servants and loving children. So may each of us bravely live and calmly die, in the faith of Thy greater Son, who cried in his mortal hour, "Father, into Thy hand I commit my spirit." AMEN.



LORD, teach us to pray! We come, not as trusting in our prayers but as trusting in Thee, who art a rewarder of them that seek Thee with the whole heart. Not for our much speaking, but for Thy much giving, does all good come to those whose loving faith fits them to receive and to impart. Teach us how to pray, in submission to Thy wiser will, for ourselves, for those we love, and for all we ought to love. Through all ages, Thy holy ones have taught us to pray and not to faint; to wait on the Lord and be of good courage; to lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting; to continue in prayer, and to watch in the same, with thanksgiving. And One we count as holiest of them all, who cried to Thee day and night, has taught us when we pray to call Thee our Father.

Teach us the way of prayer as a part of the divine order of our life and of the

life of the world. In childlike simplicity, may we come into line with spiritual laws and forces, and use them in freedom, as we use our bodily powers. May we rightly value those good desires which blossom into good words and works. May we know that every deep-hearted "God bless you" carries and brings a blessing. May we never doubt that every pure and unselfish thought, every stirring of good-will to men, may go forth in the power of the Spirit that prompts it, bearing a secret benefit to some human life.

In all the orderly movements of our minds and affections, may we gratefully own the inflowings from heaven. Out of the deeps of Thy being, into the deeps of ours, come calls and impulses of love which make us long for the welfare and happiness of all. Thou wilt not let us pray for ourselves alone.

Even when we seek for personal pu-

riety and strength, or for skill in action, may it ever be in the spirit of him who sanctified himself that his brethren might be sanctified. So would we pray and strive to be better men and women, that we may be healthier and worthier members of the great human body. O unseal within us the fountains of Thine own kindness, and help us to keep clear the channels through which love and wisdom may flow from God to man, and from each man to his brother.

O fill our hearts, fill this church, fill all the churches, with the true spirit of prayer,— the spirit that asks, and seeks, and knocks at Thy door; not with anxious pleadings, as if to move Thy mercy or change Thy purposes, but with the eager confidence that One who is more than father and mother to us all delights to be sought unto and trusted, and will withhold no good thing from those who make His will their own.

O for the faith that works inwardly by love and purifies the heart; the faith that works outwardly by love, making the evil good and the good better! So with heart and hand may we give ourselves to do the work of Him who sent us, while it is yet day. And while we joyfully and gratefully accept the thousand unasked blessings which make our cup run over, may we count among those blessings all the drops of wholesome bitterness that mingle with the sweet; may we grow strong to endure hardness as good soldiers. May ours be the helping hand for the weak; may we be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, as we are comforted of God. So may all our life be a prayer; and may each one of us be as the good tree, divinely nourished at the root, and bringing forth good fruit for the refreshment of mankind and the glory of the heavenly Husbandman. AMEN.



THOU in whose great and holy Name we gather in this dear familiar place, to how many of Thy children it has been as the house of God and the gate of heaven! Once more we offer our common prayer. Once more we ask that blessing which is better than life. Once more we lift our hearts and voices in praise to Him from whom all blessings flow.

How shall we make this a worthy service of thanksgiving? Thy thoughts toward us are many and kind. In Thy loving purpose are held all our interests and affairs, along with those of the countless beings for whom Thou dost forever care. We give thanks and praise for every message of the Spirit that has reached a waiting people in this house of sacred meditation through all the years gone by. We thank Thee for every word of warning or comfort; for all that has proved profitable for reproof,

correction and instruction in righteousness; for the gracious influences which have shamed or charmed us away from folly and sin.

We give thanks for the tender fellowships, the kindly flowings together of human hearts; for domestic and social ties that here have found sacred sanctions and strength; for sympathies and activities of helpfulness to others; for the heavenly calls heard and heeded by successive generations of the young; for the outgoing forces, working in the city and the land for righteousness and welfare. Whatever of good has come to us or gone from us, lo, it was Thy gift, and Thine alone is the praise.

As we meet here for the last time, memories of the past come thronging upon us,—all mingling with thoughts of Him who has blessed us with such precious companionship and has kept us in the unity of the spirit and the

bond of peace. The vanished faces reappear; the silent voices join in our faltering songs. Along the pages of a history which has grown sacred, we read the shining names of many faithful men, and of honorable women not a few, who hardly knew they were sons and daughters of the King.

O that this day of memories may be also a day of high and happy hopes! We are hardly worthy to be counted in the glorious company of the faithful, who in all ages have borne, through good or evil report, the standard of Thy law and gospel: yet in Thy name, in obedience to the same heavenly calling, under the same leadership of Jesus, and by the same mighty help which his example encourages us to seek and trust, we would reconsecrate our church and our lives to Thy cause and kingdom, in any field of service which shall be appointed by the wise Providence.

We ask the blessing of Heaven upon those who shall continue to devote this house to purposes of sacred worship and Christian work. May they prosper in the things of the Spirit, as they shall walk in the light of truth and in the comfort of divine grace. More than ever may this be a house of prayer for all sorts and conditions of men, and a scene where many shall learn to know the Lord and to work together for human good. We pray for all in every place and of every creed who call on the Holy Name, that they may be one in the love of God, in the grace of Christ and in the communion of the Holy Spirit, that mankind may yet become one in the life and joy of Divine Humanity. AMEN.

[Last service in West Brookline Street Church.]



DEAVENLY FATHER, God of Love! This is a day which Thou hast made, that in it we may rejoice and be glad. With grateful hearts and praiseful songs we take possession of this new sanctuary, accepting it as the gift of Thy love. Whatever part our human hands have had in such provision for our worship and work, we humbly acknowledge that all things come of Him who worketh in us to will and to do.

To-day is Thine and ours; Thine and ours were many blessed yesterdays; Thine and ours, if it please Thee, shall be many blessed morrows. Over many a tent where Thine Israel has encamped has hung the shining glory; and in the long pilgrimage down the centuries the moving pillar of cloud or fire has not failed to lead the way. This house is one more stone of remembrance, on which we write, **HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED.**

Others have labored; here we enter into their labors. Of the seed they sowed, we reap the harvest. May we take up and continue the making of sacred history. Poor, poor instruments are we; ill qualified, by what we are or by aught we have done, for the high service to which we are called: but the great Master-Workman can use us; and imperfect earthen vessels may hold the heavenly treasure. Not in ourselves is our confidence; not to us shall be the praise.

May we begin, even to-day, the true and beautiful uses of this new home of our souls. We would transplant hither our precious fellowships; we would recall here the sacred memories of those who have ascended; we would consecrate here our hearts and hands to the divine business.

O teach us how we may put this house to the highest human uses! May

it become a centre for the diffusion of the grace and truth which came with Jesus, and which are forever coming to mankind out of the same wide-open heaven. May we never meet here to delude ourselves with empty forms; never without winning some renewal of life that shall flood all our week-days with power and peace. May we ever carry hence to our common duties a spirit of good cheer and sweet reasonableness, that shall lift them above drudgery into divine service and worship; a spirit of self-forgetting love, that shall make it a joy to merge our lives in the common welfare.

May we maintain here an open school for the study and practice of Christ's religion of truth and love. May we renew and extend the hospitality which keeps open doors to the stranger, and an open mind to the light of new knowledge. May we draw the children and

youth into wholesome and happy relations with each other and with the fostering church. And may we ever count ourselves a part of the agencies that can be depended on to help forward every good work for the city and the land.

May our hatred of superstitions and bigotries and our love for truth and freedom be sweetened and made holy by tenderness for mankind; by the spirit which comes not to condemn but to save; not to destroy but to fulfill; not to tear down but to build.

Thus may our little company lose itself and find itself among the forces that are co-workers with God for the triumph of that kingdom which is heaven on earth, and which opens to faith and hope the gate of a higher heaven and a temple not made with hands. AMEN.

[First Sunday in the new Church.]



GOOD Shepherd of Souls! Once more this little flock gathers at Thy call, and we are still with Thee; with Thee, as we have been in all our goings-out and comings-in; with Thee, our present help, as Thou hast been our help in all the swift-flown days. A changing world it is for us; but Thou art the same changeless, constant, faithful, covenant-keeping God.

As we render thanks to the Giver of all good, we ever look up for more. We can only spread out the same chapter of needs; the same happy acknowledgment of dependence; the same humble confession of weakness, ignorance and short-coming; the same plea for the healing touch, the renewal of life. And we come with the same trust in that love and wisdom which have been over us in all our ways. Always is set before us the open door, from which not even the most unworthy is driven away.

Whether the summer weeks have been spent in rest and refreshment or in the routine of exacting toil,— whether they have brought songs of joy or sighs of sorrow,— whether our spiritual experience has been marked by gains or losses,— the record is made up, and we turn to the future. And in turning to the future we find ourselves still face to face with the Presence which besets us before and behind, and lays on us a hand of soft almightiness. O Immanuel, God-with-us! can we ever call Thee by a dearer name? We can only pray to realize in fuller measure, through Thine inbreathing life and our loving obedience, the union of our humanity with Thy divinity.

/ Now help us to rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things. We would come under the yoke of duty which love makes light and easy. What little we have of faith and hope

and love is born of inspiration; and we rejoice in its life-preserving power. But oh what nobler beings we might be, and what larger, better things we might do! If we have checked our own spiritual growth by half-heartedness, by hesitation and distrust, by conforming to the low standards of the church and the world, we thank Thee that we have dwelt in a barren land and have felt leanness and unsatisfied hunger of spirit, and are recalled to the abundance of the Father's house.

Our true home is under the shelter of Thy law; our only peace is in Thy love. Out of the Divine order, we are lonesome, homesick and foolish; we wither like branches severed from the vine. From every wandering way we would return to our only refuge and rest. Each and all, we would renew our holiest resolutions and solemn vows to walk in the way of Thy commandments, and to

be a brotherhood of seekers after the highest truth and the highest life. May / our vision of spiritual realities be more clear; may our response to the inward and upward call become a glad habit of the will.

We pray that the good work of regeneration and refinement begun in us, and yet so incomplete, may be accepted as a pledge of what Thou art doing and wilt do for the great world of men, O slow and patient God of mercy! And may it please Thee to take us into Thy service, and to employ us for the furtherance of the cause of truth and the kingdom of righteousness. May we keep step with the advance of light and the needs of the time. May this church take its place in the great fellowship of faithful people as a centre of loving and beautiful life and of wise and useful work — as a company of men and women and children happily united in learning and doing the

Father's will. May our services, songs and lessons make every Sunday, for old and young, a day of glad and refreshing preparation for a well-spent week, and for an ever-improving life, in the home, the school, the business cares, and all the discipline of duty and difficulty which may await us.

How good it is to be here, and together! How good to see eye to eye, and to share the open vision of truth and love! May that vision never fade, but ever shine more brightly as our guiding star. May it beckon us onward and upward, away from all unworthy living, and into that wider fellowship of the Spirit where nothing shall separate us from Thee or from the general assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. So may the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and the work of our hands be established, as not our work, but Thine.

O that this day may mark for us all a new departure — the beginning of a long spiritual advance. Grateful for the past and trustful for the future, in the obedient spirit of Jesus Christ, and as a company of his disciples, we renew our covenant; we rededicate our lives to the pursuit of all truth and to the practice of all righteousness. AMEN.

[Reopening Service after vacation.]

INFINITE SPIRIT, the Father of Spirits! On this glad Easter morning under the great sky of blue and gold, we would unite our hearts and voices with all who celebrate in anthems of joy the Victory of Life over Death.

May the symbolism of Nature and the advancing Spring speak to us, as it has spoken to men of all ages, of the Power which is almighty to create and almighty to renew. May that Power quicken our mortal bodies and our immortal spirits! May it grow clear to us that one Life stirs in every little seed or root under the softening clods and in the aspirations of the awakened soul. May we trust that the mysterious Wonder-Worker who weaves in silence such robes of beauty for the grass of the field, the lilies of the valley and the trees of the wood, will much more delight to clothe His children with the robes of moral beauty.

. Our dim vision cannot penetrate that higher realm where spirits dwell who have been redeemed from the earth; yet even here we may win some preparation for the society of the ascended ones. Even now we may come out of the graves of selfishness, worldliness and sensuality, and leave our dead past behind, as an empty tomb.

On this festal day, when all Christendom breaks into song in honor of the risen Christ, O may our rising spirits share in growing measure that pure and deathless life which is hidden with his in Thine. May our minds be illuminated with rays from the Morning-Land — with rays of that truth which scatters the mists and confusions of the night, making us free from the fear of death, free from timid dependence on traditions we know not how to verify or understand, and joyously assured, by the inward witness of Thy Spirit with our

spirits, that we too are sons of the Eternal Father and heirs to all the divine possessions.

O may that reviving and renewing Spirit raise us all to the higher levels of living! May our eyes be open to the never-ceasing miracles of nature and of the soul. May our affections be chastened, refined and hallowed. May we be inspired with the trust that forgets to doubt, with the love that knows no fear, and with the hope that, through the maddening maze of things and toss of storm and flood, holds fast to the Rock of Ages.

Rising with Christ, may we seek those things that are above. O wise Teacher, interpret to our need whatever of true and helpful meaning may be in these words of ancient faith. May we not miss the grace and truth that have wrought with regenerating and resurrecting power in so many lives. May

we learn to our profit whatever messages Thou hast sent to mankind through the word and spirit of Jesus, or through the inspiring examples of many others who have taught us how we may make our lives sublime by putting off the works of darkness, by rising above the corruptions of the world, by bearing faithful witness to the truth, and by not counting the bodily life too dear to be spent for the deliverance of mankind from error and evil.

Thou who sendest sunshine and rain, renewing the face of the earth, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, we would yield to the gracious influences and accept the appointed helps by which our lives may be enriched and made fruitful in every form of good, for others and for ourselves. Teach us the art of spiritual husbandry, that we may cultivate in ourselves and in our human world whatsoever things are true and

just, pure and lovely, for the joy of the creatures and the glory of the Creator. So may we walk in the Great Light and live in the Great Life.

May we be delivered from death and the fear of death by the power of an inward life, — by the unfolding of Thy divinity in our humanity, — a life which no grave can hold and which heaven itself cannot spare. As we do not need to know what shall be on the morrow, so we do not need to foreknow what other and larger provision has been made for a longer hereafter. Thy spirit-realm is wide and hospitable, — a house of many mansions, ever welcoming new guests, where every guest must soon be a child at home.

O that the sense of sonship may be our present blessing, holding in itself a rich promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come! We do not ask that the veil be lifted, so that what we shall be may now appear; we wait in the

patience of hope; we only pray that Thine inworking life may help us to build for our souls more stately mansions as these swift seasons roll. And whatever may or may not await us, may we be content to say, in submissive faith, Father, Thy will be done!

And when the echo of our songs shall die away, when the bells fall into silence and the lilies fade and return to dust, may our newness of life be as a perpetual Easter, so that when flesh and heart shall fail, we shall know that all our paths have led toward the All-Perfect, to whom we trace our origin, and with whom we trust our destiny forever.

AMEN.

[Easter Service.]



REAT Master of Assemblies!

With one accord, in one place, we would give ourselves to prayer, and wait for the heavenly outpouring, the baptism of the Holy Spirit! O grant us to-day the vision of eternal realities and a breath of eternal life!

Spirit of unfailing strength and untroubled peace, we seek some measure of that strength and peace as our present blessing. We would yield to the gracious influence which works to make holy spirits of us, by transforming us into the likeness of Thine own purity. May a living faith put us in living connection with Thy living power.

May our little company be indeed a part of the Church of the living God. May we be called and counted among the disciples of one who was anointed with the Holy Spirit that he might be to mankind a faithful witness of the things of God. We would hold ourselves

under Thy direction, for discipline or for duty.

We ask and seek from on high that endowment of power and wisdom and love that shall make us partakers of the divine nature, that we may be fitted to live a divine life and do a divine work. Without Thee we can do nothing; we are dead. With almighty help, we may expect and attempt great and good things. Only prepare Thine own instruments, and use us for whatever work of faith or labor of love may serve the time and the human need.

We pray to become indeed a company of faithful people. We pray that a new and living power may save us from a formal worship; that there may be a deepening sense of reality in all we say or do; that our services, songs and sermons may be pervaded by reverent sincerity and glad aspiration, so that in our place of assembly heavenly light and

love shall pass from mind to mind, like bread at sacrament. And may all our activities and agencies, for mutual improvement, for recreation or for usefulness, be inspired and guided by the good spirit working in us to will and to do.

May the touch of the Spirit be felt in the hearts of the young, drawing them early into the pleasant ways of wisdom and the sweet, safe paths of duty. In glad sincerity, may they dedicate their morning days and opening lives to the love of all things pure and good, and to the practice of all things true and right.

And as one after another Thou shalt call to higher service the men and women who carry on their hearts and hands the sober responsibilities of home and school, of state and church, may there never be wanting a succession of faithful ones who have learned to bear the yoke in youth, who have been trained to do and to endure, and who

shall come forward in the new time for the service of God and man.

May parents and teachers welcome their sacred task; may the church be as a nursing mother to all the children; may there be steady progress and improvement in all our methods of education; and may the ancient word be fulfilled of a coming time, when mankind, from the least to the greatest, shall all be taught of God.

It is in our hearts to pray for the purity, peace and progress of the Church Universal. Under all differing names and creeds, may those who have heard and heeded the Word of Life be one in the spirit and truth as it is in Jesus and as it is in all the holy ones, one in receiving the gift of power to carry forward the work of redeeming love, till Thy saving health, O Father of mankind, shall be known among all nations.

AMEN.

[Whitsunday Service.]



FATHER of mankind, who givest to Thy creatures all things richly to enjoy! What can we render Thee for all the abounding blessings that crown our lives! What canst Thou do but give, what can we do but receive, since all we can offer is already Thine own! If any sense of Thy kindness shall stir in us a feeling of reverent gratitude, this shall be the sweetest blessing of all. As little children prattle of the treasures that tell them of their father's love, so would we make mention of the streaming bounties that make our cup run over.

Thou hast given the earth to the children of men. We give thanks and praise for the old sweet fashions of nature, for the coming and going of day and night, for the march of the seasons, for the ever repeated miracle of growth by which all creatures are fed, for the stores of material for use and beauty, the faculties of

industry and the spur of necessity which impels invention. And over all is this everlasting greatness of the sky, deepening while we gaze, and opening up within us another firmament which widens into the mysterious infinity of spirit.

We give thanks for the countless common benefits and comforts of every day and night; for the flowers of human kindness that spring along the path; for the very thorns that compel a careful handling; for the measure of bodily health we can only keep by conformity to the wise laws; for all the disciplines and tasks by which our faculties are trained to strength and use; for the rich stores of good which have come to us from the toil and experience of many generations.

More than for all temporal blessings, would we join in grateful praise for the light that leads and the love that draws us to Thyself; for the mighty mercy that stoops to lift us out of dust and darkness,

out of error and evil, into the angel life of purity, freedom and joy. We thank Thee for every inspiration that stirs in our good desires and for every ray that shows the right path; for the law of commandments which teaches that we are Thy servants, and the gospel of love which assures us that we are Thy children.

And as spiritual beings we are taught by all earthly experiences to know ourselves and Thee. What wonders of instruction are addressed to our minds; what fountains of feeling are unsealed in our hearts! How the impressions of nature and the influences of grace combine to make us aware that we are living souls!

And because we are dull learners of divine lessons, Thou hast sent us wise teachers — men of light and leading, prophets and anointed ones, our noble brothers who interpret to us the sacred mysteries, help us to read the law writ-

ten in our hearts, and warn us from the paths of danger.

We thank Thee for our part in the large fellowship of the ages; for the voices that speak to us from the mighty Past; for the pure and heroic examples of men and women who have overcome the world by conquering themselves, living loyally in days of darkness and trial, and willingly offering themselves in the long service of redeeming sacrifice. We thank Thee for the great breadths of light that shine all abroad in these modern days; for all the free-minded, truth-loving students who uncover new resources for mankind; for the brave pioneers and pathfinders of progress; for the many willing hands that bear the common burdens; for the good lives that shame our indolence, and rouse us to cheerful diligence and patient endurance.

We thank Thee for our country, this great land of hope, whose wide doors

Thou hast opened to so many millions that struggle with hardship and hunger in the crowded Old World. We give thanks to the Power that has made and preserved us a nation, that has carried our Ship of State through storm and darkness, and has given us a place of honor and power, that we might bear aloft the standard of impartial liberty and impartial law. May our altars and our schools ever stand as the pillars of order and welfare.

O if our record has been stained by injustice or the misuse of power at home or abroad; if any of our own people find their bread made scanty or bitter by the selfish greed or cruelty of their brethren; if our hand has rested heavily upon a weaker people, and their blood is on our garments; or if, in the pride of prosperity, we have forgotten God, and have looked on our wealth as if it were our own, and not a sacred trust,— O help

us to see and hate the wrong and do works meet for repentance. So may this become a nation exalted in righteousness, and the broad land be filled with the homes of intelligent and contented industry, that through the long generations we may be that happy people whose God is the Lord.

Help us in our little measure to prove our gratitude by a wise and generous use of all our blessings; by cheerful and constant devotion to whatever is good for man and pleasing to God; and by sharing with mankind that light and love which are the comfort and support of all our earthly years and the rock of immortal hope. AMEN.

[Thanksgiving Day.]



LORD of the Ages! God and Father of our race! We join to-day with all in every place who keep the beautiful festival of the Holy Child. We would follow the guiding star which ever shows the way of promise for our life and for the world's salvation. We would hear and sing the song of peace and good-will with exultant hearts.

We thank and praise Thee for the coming of that great Son of Man who knew himself the Son of God, and knew that Thou didst send him with the message of grace and truth. We revere and love the Prince of Life and Captain of Salvation who walked the common earth, reaching high with one hand for heavenly gifts and with the other reaching wide to share them with all mankind. In him we see Thy compassion for a world of souls groping in darkness and groaning in bondage to error and evil.

We praise Thee as his Father and ours for all his words of wisdom and works of mercy; for the hand of blessing he has laid on all little children; for the lesson he has taught of the greatness of our nature; for the divinely human life which he cast into the world as a fruitful seed of good to all times and nations. We thank Thee that because he has lived and died we are here to-day rejoicing in the religion of love to God and man.

As we gather at his cradle and around his cross, may we gather at the throne which he invites us to share. May the ever-living Christ — the Divine Love which ever seeks to draw our humanity into conformity and union with itself — be incarnate in us as our present experience and our immortal hope. May every thought of Jesus open more widely to us the realm of spiritual truth in which he lived his short earthly life, and unlock for us the doors of that kingdom whose

citizenship it is Thy good pleasure we all should share.

We yield to the spell of his spirit; we join the glorious procession of wise men who in every land offer treasures of reverent faith and love at the shrine of sonship to God. May we prove our loyalty to the leadership of Jesus by no blind servility or unmeaning use of his name, but by seeking and finding where he sought and found the living and present Father in nature and in the soul.

As we join him in prayer and worship of the Unseen and Eternal One, may we follow him also in humility and obedience, in works of compassion to the bodies and souls of men, in seeking and saving the lost, in teaching the ignorant, in winning the sinful to repentance, in meeting without anger or fear the wrongs and brutalities of our time, in trusting ourselves, as he trusted, to the present guidance of that Spirit which

leads into all truth that it may lead into all righteousness.

O grant to us and to all the churches in Christendom a new Divine Nativity, a re-birth and fresh anointing of the Spirit, a larger endowment of the light and liberty and power of the sons of God. May there be a true apostolic succession in the ministry, an all inclusive catholicity in the church. And among our own children and youth may there ever be coming forward a consecrated band to carry forward the sacred works of spiritual emancipation and regeneration to which Jesus gave his life. May these clustering holidays become holy days by diffusing in our hearts the spirit of peace and good-will, with the uplift of loving reverence which shall dedicate all days and years to the glory of God in the highest! AMEN.

[Christmas Service.]



LORD of Eternity! Thine are the times we measure off by days and years; we are continually with Thee in the great forever, embosomed in infinite power and purity, infinite wisdom and love. Great and marvellous are Thy works and ways! As we try to look around, above or within, the wonder grows, the mystery deepens. As our feeble thoughts try to rise from the creation to the Creator, we can only bow in reverence, and say with awe: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God!

In the midst of Thy boundlessness and endlessness, we hold our little life as a gracious gift; and the very beating of our hearts seems a response to the throbbing of countless stars. O as we lose ourselves in the vastness, may we be content to find ourselves in the embrace

of a Love which cares for each and for all. May that mysterious tie which binds our life to the Central and All-including Life hold us in orderly and harmonious relations with Thy laws, Thy worlds and Thy creatures.

We would look back only to give thanks; forward only to take courage. May we never forget that through all that we have called chance and change, we have been attended by an ever-present Help, so much better to us than all our childish fears. How often have our hurts been healed; our burdens borne by the gift of a strength which seemed our own. The darkest ways have been opened before us as by a Hand which led the blind; our folly and waywardness have brought us into difficulties and miseries which proved a discipline of mercy.

What precious privileges we have inherited and shared! How many bright

companions have walked with us along the common ways! We thank Thee for the lives, better than our own, which have been shedding light amidst the world's darkness; for the purity which has made us ashamed of sin; for heavenly human influence felt even in the sordidness of the times; for the busy self-sacrificing love which has ever been winning victories over the evils around and within.

In ourselves, in the Church, in the world, how much of imperfection, error and evil remain to be conquered by the power of truth and love! How reluctantly and sullenly the old falsehoods and wrongs give way before the advancing light! How slowly, through the weary centuries, has the Gospel of the Fatherhood and the Brotherhood made its way among the warring and still barbarous nations, or in the ranks of those who have professed the holy Faith! With

what unclean hands have we borne the holy vessels! With what unclean lips have we taken the great Name in vain!

Yet Thine increasing purpose runs through the ages, and to Thee there is no disappointment, no delay. When Thy prophets and apostles cry, O Lord, how long! their very cry is born of that Spirit which makes the whole incomplete creation sigh and groan for the fuller manifestation of the Divine Humanity.

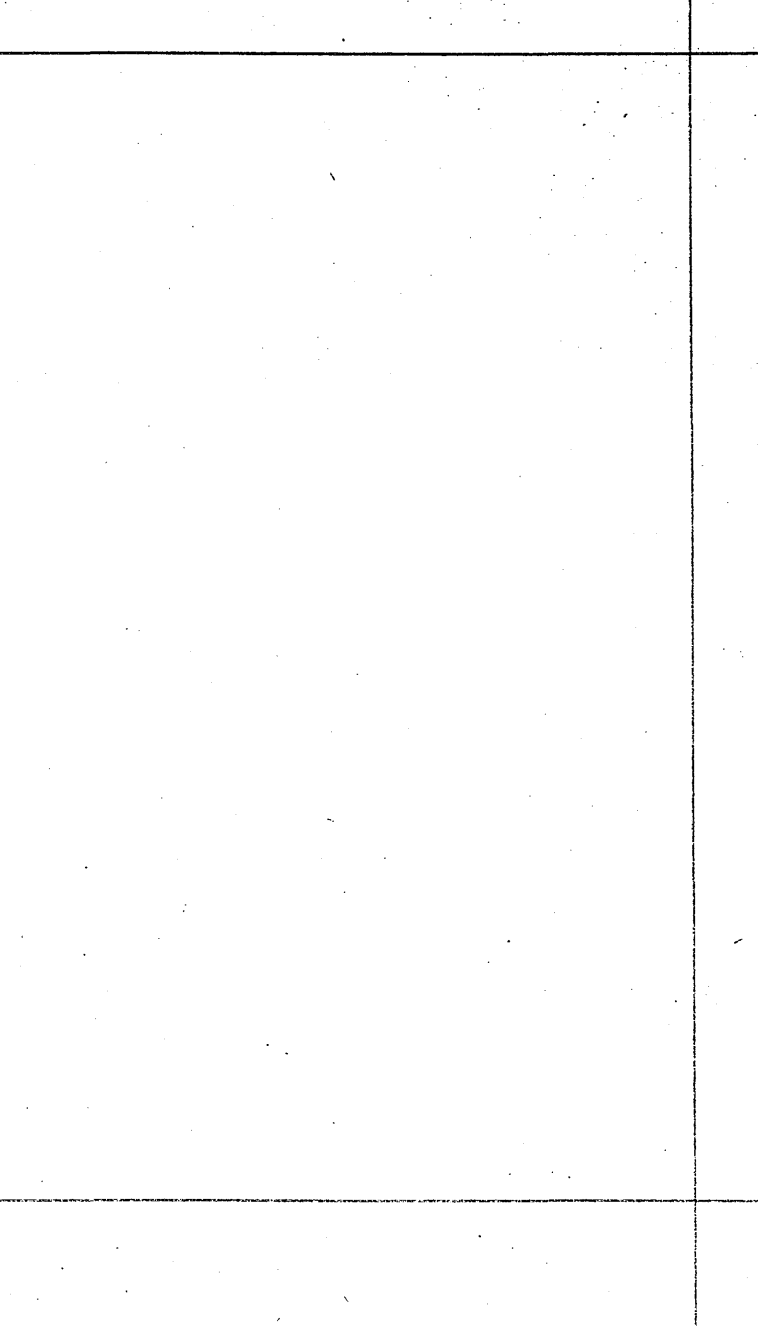
We enter another year with a prayer in our hearts that it may be to us and ours, and to our world, an acceptable year of the Lord. Leaving the things that are behind, may we join with all who are reaching forth to the things that are before, and striving to attain, for themselves and for mankind, that ideal which represents to us the perfect will of God.

Heavenly Father, we know that one prayer is according to Thy will. We

ask for ourselves, as the dearest gift of all, that there may be in us a heart to love and trust and obey Thee in the good laws that are shown to our minds; a heart to continue patiently in well-doing; and to abide in that spirit of sonship which holds the seed of immortality, and which may bear, even on earth, the fruits of the life which is hid with Christ in God. AMEN.

[New Year's Sunday.]

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